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A STUDY OF THE CIRCULATION PATTERNS
AND LIFESTYLE DEMOGRAPHICS
OF YEAR-ROUND RESIDENTS WHO USE
THE OCEAN CITY FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY

by
Judith C. Perkins

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Arts Program in School and Public Librarianship
in the Graduate Division of Rowan University
May 1, 1998

Approved by

Dr. Holly Willett

Date Approved May 4, 1998

ABSTRACT

Judith C. Perkins. A Study of the Circulation Patterns and Lifestyle Demographics of Year-round Residents Who Use the Ocean City Free Public Library. 1998. (Under the direction of Dr. Holly Willett, Program in School and Public Librarianship).

The purpose of this project was to determine if adult lifestyle behaviors, as identified in the 1990 U.S. Census, could be linked with circulation statistics for fiction and nonfiction books, and thereby, used to assist acquisition librarians in the purchase of library materials. The project, a partial replication of the Davis and Altman (1997) study, focused on the book selections made by adults at the Ocean City Free Public Library in Ocean City, NJ. The methodology included the examination of circulation records for these subjects during December, January, and February 1992-1997, and relating these choices to the spending potential index behaviors reported in *The Sourcebook for Zip Code Demographics* 11th edition. The acquisition librarians were interviewed also to determine their awareness of community demographics and lifestyle behaviors and the use of these factors in their book selection process. While the results showed some parallels between lifestyle demographics and book choices made by patrons at the Ocean City Free Public Library, the methodology used has limitations. Consequently, no generalizations could be drawn about the utility of this type of unobtrusive user study for other libraries.

MINI-ABSTRACT

Judith C. Perkins. A Study of the Circulation Patterns and Lifestyle Demographics of Year-round Residents Who Use the Ocean City Free Public Library. 1998. (Under the direction of Dr. Holly Willett, Program in School and Public Librarianship).

This project, a partial replication of the Davis and Altman (1997) study, tried to determine if lifestyle behaviors, as identified in the census, could be linked with circulation statistics, and thereby, used to assist librarians in the acquisition of books. Limitations in the methodology yielded no generalizations about the utility of this type of unobtrusive user study.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

“Come look at my library!” says a little girl to her friend as she enters the Free Public Library of Philadelphia. This scene, which appears on a publicity piece, demonstrates the sense of pride and ownership librarians hope all community members have for their hometown library.

John Berry (1989), editor-in-chief of the *Library Journal*, used the Philadelphia example to point out the belief that taxpayers have about the local public library: it belongs to them. Furthermore, he interprets this sense of ownership as a sign that a library has been successful in positioning itself in the life of an individual and in her hometown. This sense of ownership is infused into the mission statement of most public libraries. To understand the relevance of community and its application to library services, one can look at the American Library Association’s position and its emphasis for close to 50 years on the need to know your community. This need is most apparent in collection development policies because they contain a community analysis component. Through periodic examination of the use of a library’s holdings, using a variety of methodologies, the librarian is better able to evaluate, develop, and manage the collection and to respond to questions of accountability from many voices in the community.

Statement of the Problem and Need

The opening of the “Community Analysis” section of the Book Selection Policy for the Ocean City Free Public Library states: “Our function is to assemble, organize, preserve, and make easily and freely available to our community printed and non printed materials that will assist them” in a variety of activities. Since the adoption of the policy in 1970, the librarians have endeavored to carry out this obligation. However, 28 years have passed, and the community addressed in the policy needs to be reexamined to ensure the librarians’ accountability and responsiveness to the Book Selection Policy.

In most cases, the community is the residents who are identifiable by local, state, and national demographic information. For the Ocean City Free Public Library, these resident profiles take on greater significance since they identify the year-round Ocean City community. Because the library is located in a summer resort along the Atlantic coast in Cape May County, it provides services to its 1995 year-round population of 15,553 and to its summer visitor population that swells to over 100,000 in June, July, and August. To the municipal governing body and the library board of trustees, the “community” members addressed in the Book Selection Policy are the year-round residents who pay the property taxes that fund the library.

The initial challenge at the Ocean City Free Public Library was to clearly identify the year-round community. The 1990 U.S. Census provides descriptive and behavioral lifestyle characteristics of Ocean City residents; thus, it offers an objective community profile. The second challenge was to examine the adult fiction and nonfiction collections at the library since they should contain materials that reflect these lifestyle interests.

Their usage would indicated its applicability to the interests of library patrons in the community.

Therefore, with a community profile based on 1990 census data, this study used the circulation patterns of the adult fiction and nonfiction collections to determine if the census lifestyle demographics can be used to identify the “community” addressed in the Ocean City Free Public Library’s Book Selection Policy. Additionally, it sought to determine how this information could assist in the selection of library materials to meet the needs and interests of the year-round residents. This was the first study conducted at the Ocean City Free Public Library with this community specifically in mind, and was a partial replication of a study conducted by Hazel M. Davis and Ellen Altman (1997).

Limitations of the Study

The study examined the circulation patterns of the adult nonfiction and fiction holdings for the months of December, January, and February 1992 - 1997. This time frame was selected because “Usage by Patron Reports,” generated annually, indicate that “Visitor” usage statistics are the lowest during these months. Thus, the library patron is more than likely to be a year-round resident and representative of the community in the study at this time of year.

The circulation patterns were analyzed in regard to the lifestyle demographic characteristics described in the 1990 U.S. Census and reported in *The Sourcebook of ZIP Code Demographics* 11th edition. The variables included six categories: Population; Household Income; Financial Services (loans, investments); the Home and Personal Care (home repair, lawn and garden, appliances, food, health, pets); and Entertainment

(sporting goods, theatre, hobbies and toys, travel). The Dewey Decimal Classification categories by centuries were used since these statistics were the only ones available for 1992 - 1997. They were separated into two parts: those without a Spending Potential Index reference from the research reported in the *Sourcebook*, and those centuries with a Spending Potential Index reference. Fiction selections examined included only hardback choices and were limited to general fiction and four genres: mystery, western, science fiction, and historical fiction. Because of the impact the addition of audio tapes and paperback books had on the fiction circulation statistics, records for these two material types were also examined.

The two library staff members responsible for the acquisition of adult library materials were interviewed to determine how familiar they are with the lifestyle demographics of the town. Questions asked in the interviews were based upon the variables identified in the statistical analysis of the circulation patterns of books.

To clarify the purpose of the study further, it is important to note that the library does not intend to reduce or modify services to its “visitor” patrons since they are part of the Ocean City community during the summer. To do so, would be in violation of the American Library Association’s Library Bill of Rights and would debase the Ocean City Free Public Library’s responsibility to serve the total community.

Methodology and Terms

This study used specific data from the 1990 U.S. Census and unobtrusive observations gleaned from the circulation statistics for adult fiction and nonfiction books for the months of December, January, and February 1992 -1997. The term “user”

describes the year-round resident who patronizes the library during these three months. The “circulation patterns” describe the choices made in checking out books during the specific time period. Statistical data was obtained through the checkout reports supplied by the utilities module of the Winnebago automation software. The Spending Potential Indexes from *The Sourcebook for Zip Code Demographics* 11th edition are included with permission from CACI Marketing Systems, Arlington, VA.

The “acquisition librarians” were interviewed to determine how well they know the demographic lifestyle composition of the community. The same variables used in the census formed the basis of the questions. In addition, these staff members, who hold other job titles, were asked if they think the results of this study could have practical application in the selection of library materials.

The format of the study was suggested by research conducted by Hazel M. Davis and Ellen Altman and replicates, in part, their methodology as described in the January / February (1997) issue of *Public Libraries*. While the Davis and Altman study observed 11 libraries in ten zip code areas, the Ocean City study focuses on one library located in one zip code area. Additionally, the Davis and Altman study strived to determine if data on community lifestyle have value for collection development. Their hypothesis was unconfirmed because they found that “circulation patterns are remarkably similar among the libraries ... and ...did not differ markedly from community to community despite differences in income, education and lifestyle” (p. 44). The Ocean City study aimed to determine if, indeed, the usage of the collection reflected the lifestyle interests of the year-round population (15,553), since the library serves and budgets for an additional summer

population of over 100,000. In other words, the Ocean City study looked at circulation patterns from a sample of year-round patrons, a specific population of library patrons. This is the community addressed in the 1970 Book Selection Policy that sorely needs to be reexamined because of the growth and development in the southern New Jersey area, most specifically caused by the advent of the casino industry in Atlantic City in 1976. The selectors need this population profile to form criteria for acquisition of library materials, to demonstrate accountability in financial expenditures, to fulfill the informational, cultural, educational, and recreational needs of patrons, and to be responsive to the year-round residential community.

Conclusions

The results of the study provided descriptive observations about the behavior of Ocean City year-round residents and their use of the public library. This portrait can be used to revise the community analysis section of the Book Selection Policy and other activities the selectors conduct in the acquisition of library materials. The observations made about the circulation patterns in reference to lifestyle demographic behaviors suggests that evaluations of collection holdings in specific nonfiction centuries should be conducted. The observations also suggest that modifications could be made in the manner in which circulation statistics for fiction are reported. The interviews revealed how well the selectors of library materials know the subject preferences of the Ocean City residents, and that modifications in cataloging and collection development have had an impact on the use of the collection holdings for adults. Finally, the utility of the methodology used by

this study and Davis and Altman (1997) does have some benefit if it examines circulation patterns by decades.

To extend and confirm the results of this study, the Ocean City Free Public Library might conduct standard user studies — written surveys, interviews, and focus groups — during December 1998 and January, February 1999. Residents could be asked about lifestyle interests and the availability at the library of materials that reflect this interest. These obtrusive user studies should be based on the same lifestyle demographic information that formed the basis of this unobtrusive study.

As the literature of librarianship reveals, the public has revived its interest in public libraries because many provide technological resources that some community members do not have ready access to or need to learn to use. Line item expenditures in budgets are shifting away from print materials to allow for the purchase of software and hardware. It is critical that the library director and board of trustees know the community they serve and its needs prior to making radical fiscal changes that could reduce community support of the institution. It is most timely for the public library to reestablish its position as a vital institution in the town when the community has a new appreciation for library services.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

H. M. Davis and E. Altman (1997) tried to determine if circulation patterns of books and community lifestyle demographics, as reported in the 1990 U.S. Census, were useful for collection development in public libraries within communities which they identified by postal ZIP codes. Although their hypothesis was unconfirmed, their study did take a nontraditional approach to identifying library users within a community. Moreover, their study's methodology was similar to the methodology used by marketing researchers, a direction suggested as applicable to positioning a library. In addition, the Davis and Altman methodology was unobtrusive and inexpensive. Their sampling was provided by statistics on book checkouts; the expenses were based on the time and salary of the individuals who interpreted the circulation patterns and linked them to census data. However, although the study might appear to have been cost effective, the results were not those anticipated in the original hypothesis. The purpose of replicating, in part, Davis and Altman's methodology in this study at the Ocean City Free Public Library is to apply the methodology to a single community -- the year-round residents of Ocean City as reflected in the 1990 Census and their library use for December, January and February 1992-1997.

This literature review examines research on who uses the public library, use and user studies, the selectors of library materials, and observations for the future use of library holdings by patrons in a community. Perhaps, as we enter the 21st century and computer networks connect not just households to the local library but also libraries to other community libraries, it is even more important for librarians to know their community, its needs, and the expectations of present, past, and future patrons in order to maintain the library's institutional position as a vital asset within a hometown.

Positioning the Library

The American Library Association (1996) affirms in the Library Bill of Rights that policies should guide library services. Specifically, Item 1 begins, "Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves" (p. 1). The Public Library Association's Goals, Guidelines and Standards for Public Libraries Committee in 1979 said, "The specific role of the public library in responding to the broad needs of society grows out of its existence as a public agency, with broad tax support and the responsibility to serve the total community rather than a specific clientele" (p. 8).

The challenge to a library to serve its community is not limited to institutions in the United States alone. Colin Mills (1992) in his description of the library's role in Australia, says, "The onus is on the elected people, the managers and the library specialists to clearly determine what the role of the library will be for their individual community and how it can best service their communities in this changing world" (p. 4). The purpose of this clarification is not only to determine what the community wants, but also to position the

library as a source of leadership by offering new services, most particularly these days in the area of technology. By showing an interest and a commitment to improve services and by sharing this concern with government officials and the general public, the library demonstrates accountability and establishes itself as a vital force within the community.

The Need to Know Your Community

Since community members frequent the library daily, it is very easy for administrators to believe they know the community. According to Katz (1994), the stereotypical patron is middle class, has been exposed to college or received a college education, and more often than not works in some professional occupation. Moreover, the stereotypical patron who reads, also goes to movies, may attend gatherings of a political nature, and watches the news on television. These patrons are important to a library because in time of need — issue related, budgetary, or political — they can be rallied to support the library's position.

Gardner (1981) believes that a specific effort needs to be made to identify a community in definitive terms. This can be done in a variety of ways. For example, the library could examine information gathered by government agencies since they offer useful socio-economic data. A library could conduct its own community analysis or survey — a task that is tedious, time-consuming, not easy, and often beyond the training of the in-house staff. Because few “how to” manuals exist, outside consultants and experts, albeit expensive, can provide more accurate results. Regardless of the operational tool used to identify the community, Gardner says to have a complete profile of the community the following characteristics must be examined: “Historical data, legal data, geographic

information, demographic data, political information, economic data, communications facilities, social and educational opportunities, and cultural and recreational behaviors” (p. 189). While Martin (1995) would agree with Gardner’s need for demographic profiles of a community, he would further recommend that the librarian have extensive knowledge of use patterns. According to Martin, without this data it is not possible to offer an equitable response to users’ needs.

This advice should not be anything new to librarians in the field for decades. Jerome Cushman (1956) presented a paper, “The Adult Book Collection,” at the University of Illinois Library School. In it, Cushman refers to Roland L. Warren’s *Studying Your Community* (1955), a publication to assist librarians in the study of their community. Warren cites four key characteristics the librarian needs to know: (1) The history and setting of the community for planning purposes; (2) population demographics: sex ratio, rate of growth, racial characteristics and the percentage of foreign born; (3) traditions; and (4) values indicative of the community (p. 16). With this information, the librarian can become a community leader and purchase books that fit the community’s profile. Crist, Daub, and MacAdam (1994) would add that with the current emphasis on Total Quality Management and programs such as the Public Library Planning Process, all librarians must develop the ability to clearly show responsiveness to their patrons in their decisions. In doing so, they demonstrate accountability for their actions.

But Cushman also stresses that the librarian should purchase books that touch subjects about which the community appears to have little or no interest. In citing “the arts” as an example, Cushman felt it was the “duty” of the librarian in the fulfillment of the

“education” aspect of the book collection policy to address “missing links” in the community’s interest profile (pp. 17-18).

Who Uses the Library

According to Scheppke (1994), in 1948, the American Library Association recognized a need to identify the users of public libraries. The Public Library Inquiry, was commissioned from the University of Michigan’s Survey Research Center and funded by the Carnegie Corporation. The results of this survey indicated that 18 % of adults and less than 50 % of children had used the public library during the previous year. Moreover, in demographic terms, the users were overwhelmingly white, middle class, and better educated. Bernard Berelson analyzed the Public Library Inquiry and, in 1949, reported his findings in *The Library’s Public*. He upset the library community by concluding that “it may well be that the proper role of the public library is deliberately and consciously to serve the ‘serious’ and ‘culturally alert’ members of the community rather than attempt to reach all the people” (p. 35).

During the past forty-five years, librarians reacted to the 1948 study by trying to broaden their offerings to increase library usage. In 1991, the National Center for Education Statistics at the U.S. Department of Education conducted the National Household Education Survey (NHES). The results showed that while public library use was up dramatically, the typical user was still likely to be white, well-educated and reasonably well-off. According to the NHES survey, 53% of adults reported using the public library in the previous year. This was nearly three times as many as in the 1948 survey. Nearly a third of all adults reported in the NHES that they had used the public

library during the past month. This usage was interpreted to mean that the public library is important in the lives of millions of American adults. Berelson's 1949 report revealed that the public library was not used much by either the "very wealthy or the very poor." The NHES results shows that public library use is still very highly correlated with income levels. In terms of education, the NHES report showed that 17% of adults with less than a high school education were reported as users, compared to 71% of adults with a college education. Hence, while the evidence shows progress in increased library usage over the last few decades (Scheppke), Katz's stereotypical profile of the library patron is reinforced (p. 7).

Again at the national level, a Gallup poll, commissioned in 1995 by *U.S. News & World Report* and CNN, surveyed 820 randomly selected adults on October 15 and 16 ("Poll Finds," 1996). The results revealed that 67% of American adults went to the library at least once in the past year. This was an increase of 16% over the 51 percent reported in a similar Gallup poll conducted in 1978. The 1995 poll also showed that women (69%) more often than men (64%) frequented the library and that the general user tends to be more affluent (77% had incomes of more than \$50,000) and better educated than nonusers (85% college graduates). Eighty percent reported their purpose in going to the library was to take out a book (Mazmanian, 1996). Gallup poll interpreters also noted that only 8% of those surveyed thought that computers would render the library obsolete. However, despite the fact that the age of the user influenced his willingness to use technology, more than half of the library users reported using computers to find information ("The Resilient," 1995). This encouraging news on library usage was

reported not just in professional journals but also in popular magazines and on national television news broadcasts.

But what about the community member who does not frequent the library? In order to attract these people, the library must redirect its activities. The American Library Association believes this new direction must include a reduction of resources away from “popular materials” and an increase in programs for preschoolers and youth as well as a public relations initiative to demonstrate that “Libraries Change Lives.” In advocating this position and related public relations campaign, ALA further urges all librarians to know their communities (Scheppke, p. 37).

Katz (1994) places stronger emphasis on this role. He believes it is the “moral duty” of the librarian to reach out to members of the community that may need the library’s resources. Specifically, he refers to minority and multicultural groups who remain isolated in a community because of a lack of economic, social, and/or educational opportunities. Katz would have the librarian make extraordinary efforts to pull these groups into the library — the community’s melting pot of equal informational opportunity.

Use and User Studies

Gorman and Howes (1989) refer to George McMurdo’s 1980 “User Satisfaction” article for the *New Library World* in which he acknowledges librarians’ increased sensitivity to user needs and a more service-oriented philosophy in the profession. Because of this, user studies became popular in 1967 and continued to proliferate in the field. Not only did these user studies gather data about library use, but also these studies addressed user attitudes and degrees of satisfaction with library services. However,

Gorman and Howes feel that the studies McMurdo referred to lacked “scientific rigor” because they based their evaluation on interviews, questionnaires, participant observation, diaries, and intuition. Nevertheless, Gorman and Howes conclude that user studies are worthy despite the flaws in “current” methodology and in the confidence of the results.

Kristine R. Brancolini (1992) recommends use and user studies to examine the collection from the point of view of the users — past, present, and future. Use studies look at availability and accessibility of materials in the collection and check the size, scope, and depth of the collection by using recommended lists of holdings. User studies, on the other hand, focus on who is using the collection, how, and the degree of success and satisfaction that exists. By systematically collecting and reviewing data illustrating the use of materials, the evaluators can reduce subjectivity and increase the reliability of their judgment about the collection. Brancolini supports these activities by citing Dorothy E. Christiansen, Roger Davis, and Jutta Reed-Scott’s “Guidelines to Collection Evaluation through Use and User Studies” (p. 65). Gorman and Howes would agree that user studies should also be about the people and how they use the information that is available to them (p. 122).

Martin (1995) expands and clarifies the difference between use and user studies. Use studies are developed from statistical analysis, while a user study is the examination of the actual user. Brancolini explains that use studies may come in the form of circulation studies, easily available with automation software; in-house studies particularly for reference and non circulation materials; document delivery tests in which a staff member simulates a user’s quest for material; shelf list availability during which a variety of user

ability skills and material circulation are examined; citation studies more often appropriate in academic libraries needing to provide frequently cited research; and interlibrary loan studies which reveal deficiencies that are addressed from other sources. User surveys assess the ability to meet the needs of users by surveying them with a questionnaire, telephone interview, or focus group. To avoid getting “snapshot” results, librarians often use a combination of these analysis tools.

The Ocean County Free Public Library staff analyzed the community and its library needs using this variety of instruments. According to the Stella Kern, Director of Community Services, the goal was to study “the individual tastes and interests of the communities in which the 15 branches are located, and match each facility’s collection to the users’ needs.” Elizabeth Richman-Scott, collection development librarian, clarifies the goal further by pointing out the need to know the geographic location of the users and community demographic data for each branch since users appeared to be using branches not located in their home areas (“New Jersey,” 1992). Because of the extent of the community analysis, a private computer consultant was hired to assist in putting the data into readable, statistical formats. The entire project took over 10 months to complete, involved questionnaires, focus groups, document delivery inventories, hold request analysis, and some patron behavior observation. In the end, Richman-Scott (personal communication, November 14, 1997) concluded that the final report revealed nothing significantly new. It did, however, help the library to demonstrate its accountability and services to the community. Additionally, it assisted the library in positioning itself for the implementation of more technology-based services that were repeatedly mentioned as

wanted by users in questionnaires and focus groups. “It was a good exercise,” Richman-Scott said, “and one that should be done more often. It helped us to maintain a contemporary and used collection” (personal communication, November 14, 1997).

Probably, Martin (1995) would agree with Richman-Scott’s observation about the value of the use and user studies. He points out that use studies provide some link between collections and usage, but they do not directly link that usage to a specific user group. Nevertheless, the value of the use study is for accountability purposes, in that it is more prudent of a library to have a collection that is used and the statistics to verify the usage. It also gives the collection developer a rationale for the discretionary allocation of funds for the general collection and more significant reasons to purchase materials to account for missing links in the collection. Moreover, Martin also recommends the use of the automation software to balance any subjective response from staff and users. In reviewing circulation statistics over a period of years, the librarian is able to determine if a trend is temporary or permanent. These historical use statistics rarely change over time, and any change that seems apparent is probably based on a shift in social attitudes. A good example of this shift might be the interest in recent years in gay men and lesbian issues.

Sheila S. Intner & Elizabeth Futas (1994) would echo Elizabeth Richman-Scott’s remark and Dr. Gardner’s advice about the need to conduct a community analysis and collection use review periodically. However, to these two university librarians and researchers, “Evaluation is no longer an option, but an essential part of the decision making process” (p. 410). They recommend a four-focus approach: The community,

material use, shelf allocations, and user views of individual items on the shelf. Specifically, using census data and in-house surveys, librarians can better understand their community and use that knowledge to shape collections that increase use. Statistics on material circulation reveal the types of materials that should continue to be purchased. A qualified person who is knowledgeable of the community should review these statistics to avoid jumping to inaccurate judgments about some materials that do not circulate often. Shelf allocation observations focus on the layout of the library and the placement of fiction, nonfiction, CDs, videos, and periodicals. Conclusions need to be drawn about the quantity and placement of these materials in regard to the patron's use of them. Finally, Intner & Futas (1994) encourage librarians to pretend they are patrons looking at the collection for the first time. Out of date, torn, dirty materials might be candidates for weeding or repair. Relocation of holdings with low usage or improved lighting might be easy ways to increase circulation.

The Selectors of Library Materials

Not to be overlooked in the collection evaluation, community analysis, and use study activities are the selectors of library materials. Charles and Mosley (1977) identify the best selectors as having six characteristics. First, they know the community they serve. Second, they read review sources their patrons read. Third, they market their library's collection. Fourth, they weed the collection on a regular basis. Fifth, they work at the circulation desk to find out what's being requested. Sixth, they are proactive and keep ahead of trends.

According to Branin (1989), Eric Moon states in *Book Selection and Censorship in the Sixties*, “The principal reason why shelf collections are so frequently inadequate in meeting readers’ needs is that the book selection process stops early, operates too much in limbo. Rare is a library where trained personnel are assigned full-time to the care and study of the book collection and its usage” (p. 152). In 1977, the Collection Development Committee of the Resources Section of what is now called the Association for Library Collections & Technical Services conducted a preconference on collection development before the American Library Association Annual Conference in Detroit. The committee was composed of Hendrick Edelman, Juanita Doares, David Zubatsky, Murray Martin, Norman Dudley, and Sheila Dowd. These distinguished librarians, also described as “visionary,” recommended that a new subdiscipline of specialization — collection development — be established in the field of librarianship. It was distinguished from acquisitions by its functions: i.e., planning and selecting of library materials, budget allocating, collection evaluation, inventory and weeding, and, in the case of academic facilities, faculty liaison. Four years later in 1981, the first Collection Management and Development Institute was held in Stanford, CA., and many of the original committee members saw their vision materialize. An awareness of not just the difference between development and acquisition was apparent, but, more importantly, the function of collection management was realized (Mosher, 1992). Branin (1989) suggests in his essay, “Collection Management and Intellectual Freedom,” that a well organized collection management program is carried out by the librarian who knows the collection and must know the user.

Pungitore (1989) says that the operative word should be “development” since the “give them what they want” philosophy “trivializes both the institution, as well as one of the major skills (materials selection) that identifies the profession of librarianship” (p. 93). She also refers to Ethel Heins who wrote in *The Horn Book* in 1981 that the demand-oriented selection policy associated with generalism was a “supermarket view of book selection, deglorifying the individual and ignoring the educative mission of the public library” (p. 92). By catering solely to popular tastes, the librarian disregards the needs of the individual who has interest in a subject field. The rationale for the use of high circulation figures as the library’s main justification for acquisition of titles is that if the demand is ignored, the library will not be supported.

Katz (1994) sees the selector as a professional librarian who is constantly reading, wandering through the library observing the patrons, and monitoring trends in fiction and social, political, cultural, and governmental issues. He admonishes the librarian to keep in mind that a book may have significant power in a person’s life. The selector knows this, understands the users, and selects books accordingly. The selector also understands the process of helping the patron to find the “right book.” Finally, the selector has “patience, regular habits, and a sense of humor.” Katz sums up his description of a selector by stating that if the selector is “accurate, intelligent and intuitive in decision-making processes, the library has a ‘first-class collection person’ on the staff” (pp. 5-7).

Intner & Futas (1994) would add that the selector should confer with other staff members, particularly nonprofessionals, who are involved with in-house evaluations. Once staff members participate in shelf allocation analysis, user surveys, or inventories, they

want to remain in the collection development “loop” (p. 410). Gardner (1981) would concur since he believes it is wise to consult circulation desk personnel because they come into contact with patrons on a daily basis and can offer selectors ideas on materials requested by patrons in the community. Crist, Daub, and MacAdams (1994), on the other hand, would caution that sometimes these staff members make assumptions about what users want based on a small number of vocal patrons. Therefore, they recommend that the selectors use a combination of information gathering instruments prior to selecting library materials.

Reasons for and Ways to Evaluate a Collection

A closely aligned activity to the selection of library materials is the evaluation of the collection. Gorman & Howes (1989) identified three reasons to evaluate a collection. The first reason is for professional concerns to determine if the collection is doing its job. The second reason is economic and justifies the expense of maintaining and developing the collection. The third reason is for administrative purposes and the assessment of job performances. Carrigan (1997) suggests in an article on collection development and evaluation in the *Journal of Academic Librarianship* that the ultimate objective of an evaluation is to determine how effectively selectors use funds. For instance, patron use patterns may reveal underdeveloped areas, but they are unlikely to reveal over-selection. This may be a budgetary concern in some public libraries (“Collection Development,” 1996). Gardner (1981) believes every library needs to be evaluated periodically to see how well selection policies are working. If the library has acquired a lot of material that is not circulating or if it is not acquiring materials needed by the patrons, the selectors need

to be informed. Other reasons for evaluation include justifying budget demands, strengthening weak area of the collection, satisfying users, or in the case of academic institutions for accreditation. Finally, Gardner says that librarians like to compare collections with those of neighboring libraries and to boast.

Recent testimony to the importance of collection evaluation is the fact that 18 grants, totaling \$171,985 for collection development and evaluation, were awarded to New Jersey public libraries by the New Jersey State Library for 1997. Twenty-seven other New Jersey libraries received passing scores in the application process but could not be funded this year (Collection Evaluation, 1997).

Davis and Altman's Community Lifestyle Study

In the early 1990s, Davis and Altman (1997) took a different approach to the use and user study methodology by using circulation patterns generated by automation software and lifestyle demographics reported in the 1990 U.S. Census. In short, they combined circulation statistics (their use study) with lifestyle characteristics (their user study) and develop a community lifestyle study of 11 public libraries. They admitted that they could not find a similar study in library literature and, thus, were taking a "new library focus." By examining the relationship between community lifestyle demographics and the circulation patterns of library patrons in ten U.S. postal ZIP code areas, they endeavored to determine if the collection in each of the 11 libraries fit the community profiled in the census data. Moreover, they wanted to know if this information would be helpful to selectors in their collection development activities.

Davis and Altman obtained specific lifestyle behavior characteristics from *The*

Sourcebook of ZIP Code Demographics 8th edition, published in 1993, and analyzed the circulation patterns of books. Specifically, they linked the Dewey Decimal Classification nonfiction subject areas to the community lifestyle behavior characteristics to see if there were significant circulation patterns of books in areas the census found to identify the community. Some of the lifestyle variables included interests in travel, pets, and home improvements, for example. The lifestyle Spending Potential Indexes were broken into general categories: Financial Services, the Home and Personal Care, and Entertainment. Although Davis and Altman's hypothesis was unconfirmed, their study offered an objective standard to use to profile a community and an unobtrusive sampling methodology. This is relevant since Gorman and Howes (1989), Brancolini (1992), Intner and Futas (1994), and Martin (1995) each refer to the need for more objective standards to identify a community in use and users studies.

Davis and Altman used *The Sourcebook of ZIP Code Demographics* 8th edition (1993) prepared by CACI Marketing Systems which obtained its information from the 1990 U.S. Census. Essentially, CACI translated census data, gleaned from the census "long form," into geographic profiles by using the U.S. Post Office Geographic Data Technology. Davis and Altman also used *The Lifestyle Market Analyst: A Reference Guide for Consumer Market Analysis* (1994) to verify behavior patterns of residents in the ten communities in the study. Another community descriptor developed by A Classification of Residential Neighborhoods (ACORN) and reported in the *Sourcebook*, identifies 40 possible distinct resident types in each ZIP code. This information provided further details about the "most common" resident in each community and their lifestyle habits.

The Ocean City Study

Most people think of Ocean City, located in Cape May County, New Jersey, as a bustling summer resort. The city's web page promotes this image by focusing solely on the recreational opportunities in town and by referring to the population as "beach-combers, who just a few days ago were disguised as workers, professionals and tradespeople back home" (Greater Ocean City Chamber of Commerce, 1995, p. 1). This description fits the population during the summer months when Ocean City's population swells to over 100,000. However, to the year-round residents or "natives," this description of the community is misleading. The community profiles used by government agencies and produced by the 1990 U.S. Census present a more accurate picture of the actual year-round residents.

The Municipal Reference Guide: New Jersey Southern Edition 1995/96 (1996) and *The New Jersey Municipal Data Book* (Hornor, 1997) contain demographic information about the year-round residents. Both books give a one-page profile of the community with population, race, age, and general employment job categories. Specifically, the *Municipal Reference Guide* reports that in 1995 the population was 15,553; that 99% (14,602) were white; that 60% (9,384) were adults between the ages of 18 and 64 years of age; and that most people had service, managerial and professional occupations. *The New Jersey Municipal Data Book* supports this data and offers information on educational attainment. Specifically, 3,839 residents held high school degrees, and 3,034 held college or university degrees. The median family income for 1989 was \$38,998. In 1995, the Ocean City Public School District had a K-12 enrollment of

2,596. Both publications give specifics on municipal services and finances, tax rates, and the public library. *The Press of Atlantic City* recently reported that according to the U.S. Census, Ocean City's population is 15,661 and is projected to increase 3.3% because of the next wave of casino development in Atlantic City and a stable economy. Cape May County's Planning Director James Smith feels this projection is a little low because the barrier islands, such as Ocean City, have more homes than year-round residents. The new employment opportunities anticipated in the next decade and the home construction increase in Ocean City already underway will be reflected in the 2000 U.S. Census (Dowling, 1997).

This information is relevant to the study for the Ocean City Free Public Library because its operating budget has to account for the summer visitor population and the year-round residents who are the community reported in the municipal reference resources and the U.S. Census. The disparity between the two groups in population alone is close to 85,000 or more people. Hence, in this study, the Ocean City community is composed of the 15,553 year-round residents who have the opportunity to use the Ocean City Free Public Library twelve months a year. Furthermore, this is the primary community addressed in the library's Book Selection Policy.

The Census

Because the study by Davis and Altman (1997) relied on data reported in the 1990 U.S. Census and the Ocean City Free Public Library study used data from the same source, the controversy that surrounds the national census needs to be examined. The decennial census, a Constitutional mandate for the federal government, is an endeavor

applauded by marketing and many governmental institutions, but criticized as “too expensive” by some congressmen and “too intrusive” by members of the public. The 1990 “long form” cost \$2.6 billion dollars over a ten year period (Edmondson, 1994). The document was 20 pages long and had 58 items related to standard demographic topics such as family composition, education, religion, occupation, and income, as well as lifestyle behaviors including travel, hobbies, and stock market interests (Hoeffel, 1995). It is the government’s interest in these recreational and financial spending habits that the public finds too intrusive. Fulkerson (1995) explains that often the public distrusts the government’s ability to keep the census data confidential. However, research and experience indicates that the Census Bureau “has an excellent track record of protecting an individual’s privacy” (p. 48).

Keenly aware of the public’s concern for their privacy and pressured by businesses and other institutions not to reduce the “long form,” the Census Bureau sent out a Survey of Census Needs for Non-Federal Data Users. The 9000 responses returned between 1994 and March 1995 indicated that the respondents “use the data to develop and evaluate programs and policies” (“No Alternative,” 1995, p. 1). Additionally, respondents said that the geographic profiles were vital since no alternative records or surveys provide that level of accurate information. Public libraries were among the 60 percent of the respondents that expressed a need to have this data.

Entrepreneur Steve Forbes (1995) disagrees. “It (The Constitution) does not require the government to collect reams of data for the convenience of social scientists and corporate marketers. The private sector has enough resources and ingenuity to get all the

marketing data it needs” (p. 23). But Forbes appears to be in the minority on this issue since the Census 2000 Advisory Committee has recommended maintaining the essence of the long form because of its usefulness to municipal and state governments. Ann Azari, Mayor of Fort Collins, Colorado, and chair of the advisory committee, says that “Cities will be able to review and cross check Census Bureau address lists and maps in detail” (p. 14), making the tool even more valuable for research and analytical purposes (Peterson, 1996). Thus, while the 2000 Census will cost approximately \$4 billion dollars to administer and code (Peysner, 1995), the results will still provide public libraries and others with community profiles to enable them to evaluate programs and forecast future activities.

The Future of the Community Library

Recalling John Berry’s observation about the importance of a community’s sense of ownership in the public library also brings a precaution. “Library collections do not belong to ‘us’ or ‘me’ but to ‘them’” [the community] (p. 4). Thus, it is paramount that the library staff know the community and reflect it in the collections. Perhaps this need is even more relevant today with the introduction of technology-based services in the library.

In regard to this issue, Louis Harris and Associates conducted a telephone survey in 1990 of more than 2000 Americans (over age 18) in a sample designed to assure representation of households in city, suburban, and rural areas of all 48 contiguous states. The survey is important because it particularly addressed technology and found that one in four respondents had a home computer. Two out of three respondents said that accessing

the library on-line would be “very valuable” or “somewhat valuable” (“Harris Survey,” 1991, p. 14).

The Harris results are backed up by the encouraging findings of a public opinion survey published by the Benton Foundation in *Buildings, Books, and Bytes: Libraries and Communities in the Digital Age* (1997). The survey, funded by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, examined the importance of computer technology and the public’s willingness to pay for it. Thirty-seven percent of the 1,015 respondents said that in this digital age, it will be most important for public libraries “to be a place where people can use computers to find information to use on-line computer services,” and 35% of the respondents said the public libraries will be most important as a place “where people can read and borrow books” (p. 3).

Libraries for the Future, an organization that advances the importance of the community and the public library, has recently formed nationwide. Its mission is “to preserve and revitalize the free public library as an essential institution for a democratic society” (Libraries for the Future [LFF], 1997, p. 1). The agenda for LFF includes education, advocacy, and demonstrations, such as the model for community-library collaboration — the Community-Library Information Collaborative (CLIC). The goals of CLIC are “to link underserved communities with educational and informational resources; to promote community ownership of public libraries; and to demonstrate the potential of the library as an information and services hub that contributes to individual and community development” (LIF’s Program, 1991, p. 1). Arthur Curley, former president of the American Library Association, U.S. Senator Paul Simon, and Steven Kest, executive

director of ACORN, are among the library advocates that endorse the activities of Libraries for the Future since they urge that the integrity of the public library system be maintained in the community and strengthened through advancements in technology (What Public, 1997, p. 1).

Conclusion

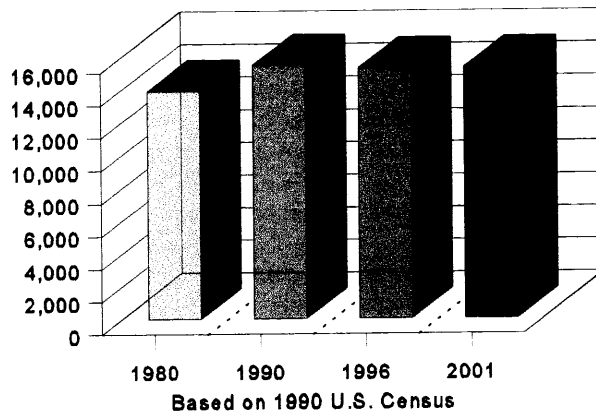
John Berry (1997) tells librarians not to fret: libraries will not vanish because of technology. He basis his believe on the fact that the essence of a library's mission will remain; i.e. "to ensure that people get access to the opinion, information, and entertainment they need to function more effectively and enjoyably, regardless of the format in which that material is packaged" (p. 6). In short, the library of the future has arrived in most communities. Librarians need to rely on their professional training and experience to keep the library as vital community institution. To do this, the public librarian must know and serve its patrons and nonpatrons, and promote the institution that has the resources to give the community access to the past, present, and the future.

Chapter 3: Methods

Subjects

The subjects in this unobtrusive study were the patrons who used adult patron library cards to check out fiction and nonfiction books at the Ocean City Free Public Library during the months of December, January, and February 1992-1997. The “Usage by Material Types” reports, generated annually by the library, provided this statistical information. (see Appendices C). Because the population fluctuates in Ocean City throughout the year, this sample represents the resident population who have stability and are more readily identifiable during this quarter of the year. This identification is important to the study because the lifestyle profile, published in *The Sourcebook of Zip Code Demographics* 11th ed. (1997), is based upon the information gathered during the 1990 U.S. Census. The data for Ocean City, NJ, zip code 08226, was used in this study

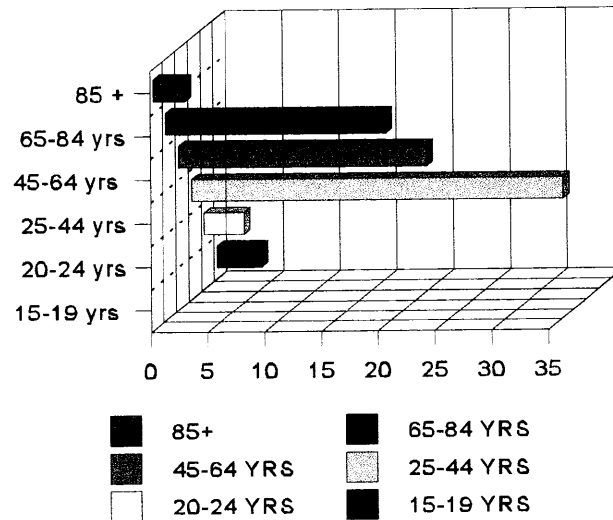
In specific demographic terms, the *Sourcebook* reported that the year-round population of Ocean City was 15,512 in 1990 and projected a very modest .2 decline by 2001. The racial composition of the population is predominately white, 93.6%; with 5.1% African American; .6% Asian/Pacific; and 1.5% Hispanic.



Ocean City Population

Figure 3-1. 1980 = 13,949; 1990 = 15,512; 1996 = 15,287; 2001 = 15,337. Reported in *The Sourcebook for Zip Code Demographics 11thed.* (p. 205-A), Arlington, VA: CACI Marketing Systems. 1997. Reprinted with permission.

The greatest percentage of Ocean City's population, 32.7%, is between 25-44 years of age, with 81.9% of the population 18 years or older. The median household income estimated for 1996 was \$35,096, with 39.7% of the population earning between \$25,000-\$49,999. The *Sourcebook* also indicates that for 1996, the median age of the adult population is 40.8 years. This fairly high median age is reflected in the Adult Age Distribution graph (Figure 3-2), and may be attributed to the fact that Ocean City is a retirement community for many people who had previously vacationed in the town when they were part of the workforce.



Adult Age Distribution

Figure 3-2. 15-19 yrs. = 3.9%; 20-24 yrs. = 3.5%; 25-44 yrs. = 32.7%; 45-64 yrs. = 21.8%; 65-84 yrs. = 19.3%; 85+ = 2.8%. Reported in *The Sourcebook for Zip Code Demographics* 11th ed. (p. 205 B), Arlington, VA: CACI Marketing Systems. 1997. Reprinted with permission.

Demographic information reported from *The Municipal Reference Guide: New Jersey Southern Edition 1995/1996* (1996) and *The New Jersey Municipal Data Book* (Hornor, 1997) contained similar information. *The New Jersey Municipal Data Book* indicates that 20% of the population are college graduates and / or have studied beyond this degree level. Of the 8081 individuals identified as part of the civilian labor force, 2534 hold managerial and / or professional jobs, and 2,446 hold technical, sales, or support jobs.

Design

This study was based upon a previous study conducted by Davis and Altman (1997) and attempted to make observations about the utility of lifestyle demographic

information in collection development. The essence of the study concerned the Spending Projection Indexes reported in the *Sourcebook* and their utility in verifying fiction and nonfiction usage in a public library. This examination allowed the researcher to make general observations using specific interests variables presented in the Spending Projection Indexes.

In order to draw some conclusions, three of the four Spending Potential Indexes were studied: “Financial Services,” “The Home,” and “Entertainment.” The “Personal Care” category was studied in conjunction with “The Home” category since the Dewey Decimal Classification of these materials overlapped. Accordingly, book selections in the 300 range were interpreted to account for financial interests; selections made in the 600 range represented the home and personal care interests; and selections made in the 700s, 800s, and 900s represented entertainment interests.

This study also looked at the usage statistics from the other five DDC centuries to determine if any observations could be drawn from the checkout behaviors in these areas. This data provided usage patterns in the areas of reference, philosophy, religion, language, and science and reflected checkout statistics in the 000, 100, 200, 400, and 500 DDC centuries. An attempt was made to draw some conclusions about interest in these areas which have less of a consumer spending potential. Because the purpose of this study focused on the identity of the community, this information seemed relevant.

The usage of fiction materials was examined in the same manner and over the same time period. Because “Usage by Material Types” reports specify the number of choices made in the mystery, western, science fiction, and historical fiction genres, as well as the

number of general fiction works selected , the usage statistics in these categories were considered (see Appendix C).

Two professionals at the Ocean City Free Public Library who have responsibilities for book selection were interviewed (see Appendix B). These trained professionals, with eight and 16 years experience respectively, at the library, were questioned about acquisition procedures. In keeping with the focus of this study, the main purpose of the interview was to determine if they knew and used lifestyle demographic information to make decisions about the development of the adult holdings.

Procedure

The study began by identifying the number of nonfiction materials checked out by adult patrons December, January, and February 1992-1997 as indicated in the “Usage by Materials Types” reports (see Appendix C). It then examined the nonfiction usage in two areas: those centuries without a link to the Spending Potential Index — 000, 100, 200, 400, and 500; and those centuries with linkage to the Spending Potential Index — 300, 600, 700, 800, 900. The use results were ranked one to five; one indicating the greatest circulation and suggesting the greatest interest; five indicating the least circulation and suggesting the least interest. Next, the circulation average totals were compiled and averaged to find a five year average circulation in each of the DDC centuries. This average was then used to determine what percentage of the holdings the century circulated. The statistics for the 300, 600, 700, 800, and 900 centuries were further examined with reference to the Spending Potential Index lifestyle demographic profile

provided in the areas of “Financial Services,” “The Home and Personal Care,” and “Entertainment.”

The same procedure was used to look at the data concerning the use of hardback fiction materials, with specific attention given to books cataloged as mystery, western, science fiction, and historical fiction. Eventually, these numbers gave some insight into the reading interests of the community. Usage statistics for audio tapes and paperback books were also examined to determine their impact on the circulation of hardback fiction books.

One of the main points stressed in the literature review is that the selector or acquisitions librarian needs to know the community for which materials are purchased in the process of collection development. For this study, separate, hour-long interviews were conducted with the two professionals at the Ocean City Free Public Library who have the responsibility for purchasing books for adult patrons. Questions were formulated based upon lifestyle demographic information for Ocean City outlined in *The Sourcebook for Zip Code Demographics* 11th edition, and initial observations about statistical patterns of material usage. The researcher conducted the interviews at the library in February 1998 and recorded the responses.

Limitations

This study was a partial replication of the Community Lifestyle Study conducted by Davis and Altman (1997). Whereas Davis and Altman studied eleven populations of adult patrons in ten zip codes over a year-long period, this study was more community

specific and limited to the specific calendar quarter, December - February, over a five year period.

Because the “Usage by Material Types” summaries were reported in centuries and not decades, it was impossible to draw conclusions about specific interests. For instance, one category in the Spending Potential Index is “lawn and garden,” which could be examined with more specificity by noting checkout statistics in the 630 decade. Since this data was not available and also includes pet books, this study offers only limited generalizations about the behavior and interest patterns of the adult patrons.

Chapter Four: Results

Introduction

The objective of this study was to make observations about the use of nonfiction and fiction books over a five year period based on circulation statistics and on interviews with library personnel. The results are presented accordingly. First, nonfiction materials without reference to the Spending Potential Index identified for Ocean City; secondly, nonfiction materials with reference to the spending potential index; thirdly, fiction use; and finally, the interviews with the librarians and their observations on the use of library materials by the year-round residents at the Ocean City Free Public Library.

The Spending Potential Index refers to calculations made by researchers for CACI Marketing Systems who use U.S. Census demographics to identify the lifestyle behaviors of a particular group. These lifestyle behaviors also were used by Davis and Altman (1997) in their study, and therefore, included in this one.

Nonfiction Materials without Spending Potential Reference

The statistics in Table 4-1 are a summary of circulation records for three-month periods from December 1992 - February 1997. The raw data from the time period in the study appear in Appendix C. "Holdings" refers to the number of volumes in that century. The percentage number represents holdings in that century and not in the entire collection. The standard error is also presented.

Table 4-1

**Nonfiction Materials without Spending Potential Reference:
Circulation Summary**

DDC	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	Average	SE	Holdings	Circulated
000	38	66	91	100	107	80	28.3	743	11%
100	165	143	159	117	143	145	18.6	1147	13%
200	55	78	95	76	92	79	15.9	695	11%
400	25	30	29	17	23	25	5.2	280	09%
500	83	84	106	120	73	93	18.2	1280	07%

Note. Circulation totals are summaries based on the raw data in Appendix C. Years refer to December of the previous year and January, February of year indicated: December 1992; January, February 1993. Holdings refers to the total number of volumes in that century. Circulation percentage refers to the percentage of the holdings in that century which were checked out based on the average for the five years.

This summary of circulation statistics shows that during the time period of the study, books in the 100 century circulated most frequently, while books in the 400 century circulated least often. This trend may suggest that the Ocean City library patrons are interested in the subjects of psychology, self-help, and personality found in the 100 century. However, they are less interested in books on language and foreign languages found in the 400 century.

Circulating reference resources and computer books in the 000 century gained in usage during the time period and suggest increased interests in these materials. Over the five year period, their usage moved from fourth to second highest in circulation numbers (see Appendix C).

Looking at Table 4-1, we see that the percentage of the 200 holdings that circulated was the same percentage as that of the 000 holdings. While book circulation for the 200 century ranked third in 1993, 1994, and 1997, it ranked fourth in 1995 and 1996. In general, we observe that books on religion and mythology increased in their circulation. This increase is very evident annually in the month of January and may be attributed to academic assignments given in world culture topics at that time of the year.

With the exception of 1997, the use of science books in the 500 century increased. The numbers in Appendix C show that books in the 500 century were the second most frequent to circulate in 1993, 1994, and 1995; third in 1996; and fourth in 1997. Although no rationale can be offered for the drop in circulation in 1997, it can be noted that only an average of 7% of the holdings circulated. Of the Dewey Decimal Classifications fields observed in Table 4-1, the circulation percentage for the 500 century is the smallest yet the holdings are the largest. This observation may be typical if one considers some science information as ephemeral. Patrons in need of scientific information may rely on books in the reference holdings which can not be checked out rather than on books in the circulating holdings.

Further examination of the percentage statistics shows that 11% of the 000 and 200 book holdings circulated during the five year period. The standard error is more dramatic: 28.3 in the 000s; 15.9 in the 200s, and indicates that patrons may not use these materials on a consistent basis. Books in the 100 century enjoyed the largest percentage of circulation, 13%. However, because the 100 holdings were also the greatest in volume numbers, the standard error of 18.6 is a reasonable one. Table 4-1 also illustrates that 9%

of the books in the 400 century circulated. In this case, the standard error of 5.2 indicates more consistent use. The standard error for books in the 500s was 18.2. Although this standard error appears to be close to that of the 100s, 18.6, the number of volumes in the two holdings is different. This difference is reflected not only in the standard error, but also in the percentage of the holdings which circulated in these two centuries — 13% for the 100s and 7% for the 500s. Thus, the two standard errors should only be compared with caution.

Nonfiction Materials with Spending Potential Reference

The statistics summarized in Table 4-2 are based on circulation numbers found in Appendix C. The statistics in this section need to be examined in two ways: first, for usage and percentage of the collection; and secondly, with reference to the Spending Potential Index provided by *The Sourcebook of Zip Code Demographics*.

Table 4-2

Nonfiction Materials with Spending Potential Reference: Circulation Summary

DDC	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	Average	SE	Holdings	Circulated
300	499	401	476	447	425	450	39.1	6083	07%
600	613	612	798	724	712	692	79.5	6626	10%
700	272	290	331	445	369	341	69.0	3928	09%
800	127	140	141	129	133	134	6.3	2435	06%
900	339	343	366	417	405	374	35.6	4814	07%

Note. Circulation totals are summaries based on calculations from Appendix C. Years refer to December of previous year and January, February of year indicated: December 1992; January, February 1993. Holdings refers to the total number of volumes in that century. Circulation percentage refers to the percentage of the holdings in that century which were checked out based on the average for the five years.

In looking at Table 4-2 and the statistics in the Appendix C, we observe that the use of books in the 600 century is consistently higher over the five year period. This suggests that Ocean City library patrons check out books on business, health, pets, gardens, and automobile repair more often than they use any other area of the nonfiction collection.

During the five year period, books in the 300s, — education, fairy tales, folklore, government and law, — were consistently the second most frequent to circulate. This suggests a fairly consistent interest in books on the social sciences.

Based on the rankings found in Appendix C, we observe that books in the 700 century, — crafts, painting, photography, recreation, and sports, — circulated on the average fourth in frequency, with the exception of 1996 when circulation ranked third. However, Table 4-2 shows us that over the five year period, the average circulation of books in the 700s ranked third in frequency.

Poetry, drama, and literary criticism, found in the 800s, showed the least number of circulations in the time period of the study and consistently ranked fifth.

Books in the 900 century, -- geography, travel, collected biographies, and history,-- ranked third in frequency of circulation, with the exception of 1995 when it ranked fourth. However, in Table 4-2 we observe that the circulation of books in the 900 century averaged fourth in frequency.

Looking at the percentage of books that circulated in these five individual centuries, we see that 7% of the 300 holdings circulated, with a standard error of 39.1. The books in the 600s that circulated represented 10% of the 600 holdings. The standard

error in this century was 79.5. Based on the standard error score, we can see that books in the 600 century circulated with the least consistency. This inconsistency may be attributed to the gradual increase in volumes in the 600 century, a section of the entire holding that contains very popular and utilitarian volumes.

According to Table 4-2, the circulation of books in the 700 century increased in use with the exception of 1997. Nine percent of the holdings circulated with a standard error of 69. As with the annual circulation statistics for the 200s, use of the books in the 700s increased in January, in particular. Again, this usage increase and large standard error number may be attributed to academic assignments.

Looking at the circulation pattern for books in the 800 century, we observe that the check out numbers are lower than those in the other four centuries. Only 6% of the holdings circulated, and thus resulted in the lowest standard error score, 6.3. The circulation of books in the 800 is more consistent as indicated by this low error score.

Finally, the books that circulated in the 900 century represented 7% of the holdings. The circulation pattern shows an annual increase with the exception of 1997, with a standard error of 35.6. While the 35.6 error score looks similar to the 39.1 standard error score for the 300 century, we note a significant difference in the number of volumes in each holding. The 300s contain 6083, while the 900s hold 1,269 fewer volumes (4814).

Lifestyle Behavior and Spending Factors

Part of this study examined the circulation records in these five centuries in relationship to lifestyle behaviors and spending potential identified in *The Sourcebook for Zip Code Demographics*. Researchers at CACI Marketing Systems used information from

the 1990 U.S. Census to profile the spending potential of Ocean City residents based upon their lifestyle behaviors in the areas of “Financial Services,” “The Home and Personal Care,” and “Entertainment.” The three indexes were tabulated by *Sourcebook* researchers and defined to represent a value of 100 as the average spending (x = 100), a value of more than 100 as high spending, and a value of less than 100 as low spending, relative to the entire United States. Census details allowed the researchers to project a higher or lower spending potential for consumers, and in this case, Ocean City residents.

Table 4-3

Spending Potential Index for Financial Services

Product	Spending Potential	x Difference
Auto loans	102	+2
Home loans	92	-8
Investments	129	+29
Retirement plans	98	-2

Note. x=100. The mean average spending in each field is \$100 in the U.S. *The Sourcebook for Zip Code Demographics 11th ed.* (p. 205-D), Arlington, VA: CACI Marketing Systems. 1997. Reprinted with permission.

Examination of information in the “Financial Services” category suggests that Ocean City residents have an interest in financial information because they spend close to or more than the average in three out of four areas. The investment area has a very high spending threshold. Books on the subject of finance are most often found in the 300 century (see Table 4-2). It has been observed that books in the 300 century consistently

ranked second in frequency of circulation. Interviews with the acquisition librarians verify that Ocean City library patrons are very interested in books on investments, request them frequently, and books are specifically purchased in response to this interest and need (K.W. Mahar, personal communication, February 12, 1998; I. Rice, personal communication, February 19, 1998).

Circulation linkage to books on auto and home loans is difficult to make since these resources tend to be non circulating reference books. The acquisition librarian with 18 years of experience said that patrons frequently ask for *The Blue Book Used Car Guide* on automobile values and the Chilton books on auto repairs. Statistical books on mortgages are seldom requested (I. Rice, personal communications, February 19, 1998).

The two point below mean spending potential profile on retirement plans in the “Financial Services” category seems logical since Ocean City has a population with a mean age of 40.8. *The Sourcebook for Zip Code Demographics* further identifies the Ocean City population as composed of “wealthy senior citizens” (p. 642).

In examining the overall percentage of spending potential in the areas of “The Home and Personal Care” (Table 4-4), it is evident that seven out of eight categories are in the 90th percentile or above. “Lawn & Garden,” “Health,” and “Pet” categories are significantly above the 100 mean base, while “Remodeling” is the lowest. Accordingly, based on the Spending Potential Index, Ocean City residents consume or use more products for the lawn and garden, on their health, and for pets more than they do for other products in this area. They are likely to spend less on remodeling the home.

Table 4-4

Spending Potential Index for The Home and Personal Care

Product	Spending Potential	x Difference
Appliances	94	-6
Electronics	99	-1
Food	96	-4
Health	111	+11
Home repair	93	-7
Lawn & Garden	115	+15
Pets	107	+7
Remodeling	87	-13

Note. $x=100$. The mean average spending is \$100 in the U.S. *The Sourcebook for Zip Code Demographics 11th ed.* (p. 205-D), Arlington VA: CACI Marketing Systems. 1997. Reprinted with permission.

The 600 century contains most of the books associated with this “The Home” and “Personal Care” category (see Table 4-2). Looking at the circulation statistics for books in subjects associated with the Spending Potential Index categories, the 600 century stands out as having the greatest circulation of books consistently over the five year period in the study. In keeping with this, when the acquisition librarians were asked about the patron interests in books in the 600 century, both interviewees responded that it had the greatest circulation and interest to Ocean City residents who patronize the library. They easily identified subjects such as food, pets, health issues, and gardens as of interest to patrons. They said that they specifically purchase books in these subject areas in response to this

interest (K.W. Mahar, personal communication, February 12, 1998; I. Rice, personal communication, February 19, 1998).

Examination of Table 4-5 quite obviously reveals that Ocean City residents spend more on and consume more products dealing with sports than they do other products in the “Entertainment” area. Their spending on hobbies and theatre have only one percentile of difference, while travel spending is four percent below the mean.

Table 4-5

Spending Potential Index for Entertainment

Product	Spending Potential	x Difference
Hobbies	100	---
Sports	107	+7
Theatre	101	+1
Travel	96	-4

Note. $x=100$. The mean average spending in each field is \$100 in the U.S. *The Sourcebook for Zip Code Demographics 11th ed.* (p. 205-D), Arlington, VA: CACI Marketing Systems. 1997. Reprinted with permission.

The circulation statistics in the 700 and 900 centuries (see Table 4-2) are difficult to interpret in relation to the “Entertainment” category. The standard error score of 69 shows us that the use of books the 700s is inconsistent. This inconsistent circulation pattern, which revealed an increase in particularly in January, might be attributed to the need to use books in these holdings more for research papers at this time of the year. Since art books are also classified in the 700 century, a linkage of patrons’ interests solely to hobbies and sports would be a “long shot.”

The acquisition librarians interviewed stated that Ocean City residents have a significant interest in travel books. For this reason, additional and revised travel books are purchased annually. The acquisition librarians did not believe the history books in the 900 century circulated as often as the travel books, although they did not have the circulation statistics to confirm this belief (K.W. Mahar, personal communication, February 12, 1998; I. Rice, personal communication, February 19, 1998). The fact that the standard error score was the second lowest in this area of the study (see Table 4-2), indicates some consistency in the use of books in the 900 century. The inability to track the use of books from 920 on contributes to the difficulty of reporting these findings.

Books in the 800 century of which theatre or drama is a subject have the least circulation history over the five year period in the study. The slightly above average spending potential indication in the theatre area may suggest that books in the 800s are under utilized or that the collection needs to be developed. The term “theatre” also may misrepresent the topic. Film resources are found in the 700 century, one that has a significant usage. The acquisition librarians interviewed verified that they do not experience numerous requests for theatre or drama materials. They believe Ocean City residents have more interest in films, and they support this belief with the increased development and usage of their entertainment video collection (K.W. Mahar, personal communication, February 12, 1998; I. Rice, personal communication, February 19, 1998).

The Ocean City spending potential for hobbies in the study is the same as the national mean average. Again, books in the 700 century contain resources on crafts and toys, and the circulation statistics indicated that the books in the 700 century are used

more often than books in other Dewey Decimal Classification centuries. The acquisition librarians verify that hobbies are popular with the Ocean City residents and are purchased often to address specific interests, such as in quilting, decorative painting, or holiday craft making (K.W. Mahar, personal communication, February 12, 1998; I. Rice, personal communication, February 19, 1998).

Fiction Materials:

The third phase of this study examined and made some observations about the circulation statistics for adult hardback fiction books. The circulation records in the Appendix C reveal perfect consistency in the ranking of circulation frequency for the time period in the study. However, changes in cataloging and labeling of materials make it necessary to interpret the results with caution.

Table 4-6

Circulation Summary for Fiction

DDC	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	AVE.	SE	Holdings	Circulated
Fiction	2269	2180	1726	1547	1611	1867	334.4	13,346	14%
Mystery	520	615	347	224	240	389	172.8	2,156	18%
Western	17	13	5	6	7	10	5.2	177	6%
Sci. Fiction	56	38	26	12	14	29	18.3	456	6%
Hist. Fiction	88	81	58	37	30	59	25.7	466	13%
TOTALS:	2,870	2,927	2,162	1,826	1,902	2,354	527.9	16,601	14%

Note. Circulation totals are summaries based on the raw data in Appendix C. Years refer to December of the previous year and January, February of year indicated: December 1992; January, February 1993. Holdings refers to the total number of volumes in this Dewey Decimal Classification. Circulation percentage refers to the percentage of the holdings with that classification which were checked out based on the average for the five years.

Examination of statistics for fiction circulation reveals that library patrons check out fiction books, and used 14% of the hardback fiction holdings during the time period in the study. However, observation of the totals reveals a steady decline in the circulation records: 2,870 in 1993; but 1,902 in 1997. This difference may be attributed to the acquisition of audio tapes and paperbacks that were not included in the fiction calculations.

Table 4-7

Audio Cassette Tapes and Paperback Books: Circulation Summary

Material Type	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	Average	SE	Holdings	Circulated
Audio tapes	236	662	735	896	1116	729	326.1	2,465	30%
Paperbacks	602	608	897	882	858	769	150.7	6,370	12%

Note. Circulation totals are summaries based on raw data in Appendix C. Years refer to December of the previous year and January, February of year indicated: December 1992; January, February 1993. Holdings refers to the total number of materials or volumes with this classification. Circulation percentage refers to the percentage of the holdings in that classification which were checked out based on the average for the five years.

When the Ocean City Free Public Library moved to its present location in 1990, the acquisition librarians were able to purchase more materials, thereby increasing the holdings throughout the entire collection (K.W. Mahar, personal communication, February 12, 1998; I. Rice, personal communication, February 19, 1998). This increase is particularly reflected in the holdings for audio cassette tape and paperback book collections. As the summary circulation statistics indicated, the use of these materials increased dramatically. For example, the use of audio tapes increased from 236 in 1993 to

662 in 1994. The use of paperbacks increased most between 1994 and 1995 when the statistics rose from 608 to 897. The most dramatic drop in hardback circulation was evident during this same period when the fiction totals drop in 1994 from 2,927 to 2,162 in 1995 (see Table 4-6). In short, it can be observed that Ocean City residents did increase their use of audio tapes and paperback books as more became available to them.

Also in 1990 during the time of the move to the new facility, the cataloging staff was directed to identify fiction by genre only if the Library of Congress cataloging clearly indicated it (K.W. Mahar, personal communication, February 12, 1998; I. Rice, personal communication, February 19, 1998). Thus, the MARC records prepared since 1990 contain fewer genre indicators. This may be the reason why the circulation records in the genre fields show a steady decline. Consequently, the circulation records, standard error numbers, and percentage of usage averages shed less reliable information about fiction book choices made by the patrons. Nevertheless, some observations can be made.

While the circulation statistics for the 800s was consistently ranked the lowest over the five year period and reflected only a 6% use of that section of the holdings (see Table 4-5), fiction books enjoy a higher circulation and represent usage of 14% of the fiction holdings (see Table 4-6). In viewing the statistical data for the genre forms of fiction identified in this study, it would appear that Ocean City residents select mystery novels more often than they do fiction from other genres. This observation might be applied to the high spending potential reference in the "Entertainment" category. Again, the high use of the mystery holdings may suggest an interest in entertainment in their selection of reading material. According to the interviewees, books by best-selling authors, award-

winning writers, and well-known romance and mystery authors are purchased and leased on a regular basis (K.W. Mahar, personal communication, February 12, 1998; I. Rice, personal communication, February 19, 1998).

The circulation numbers for western, science fiction, and historical fiction books are very low in comparison to the circulation numbers for mystery books. This dramatic difference in statistics can be attributed to patrons' preference for mysteries, as indicated in Table 4-6; but, more significantly, to changes in cataloging and book preparation procedures prior to shelving. The acquisition librarians said that patrons preferred to have the genre labels. However, they knew that the integration of all genres into the fiction holdings alphabetically by author is a more contemporary practice. Furthermore, they felt that the absence of the genre labels on the books makes the collection look more attractive (K.W. Mahar, personal communication, February 12, 1998; I. Rice, personal communication, February 19, 1998). Thus, the low circulation numbers might not mean, for example, that fewer westerns are read, but that the circulation statistics cannot account for their usage.

Interviews

Two librarians with responsibilities for purchasing materials at the Ocean City Free Public Library were interviewed in February 1998, and asked about their background, acquisition of materials procedures, their demographic knowledge in regards to the year-round residents of Ocean City, and the circulation of the adult nonfiction and fiction holdings (see Appendix B).

Both interviewees had worked at the library for 8-16 years, and had been residents of the community their entire lives, between 30-55 years. Both had been responsible for purchasing library materials for the last 5-8 years, and used the standard collection development resources — publisher's catalogs, *The New York Times Book Review*, the Wilson's *Public Library Catalog*, and professional conferences — in this activity. They specifically cited "patron requests" as a source that prompted attention to the development of a particular area of the collection. For example, patrons often request "money management" titles that are reviewed in magazines or on television. Not only are these requests filled, but similar books are added to the holdings (K.W. Mahar, personal communication, February 12, 1998; I. Rice, personal communication, February 19, 1998).

Since this study focused on the patrons who used the library during the months of December, January, and February, the librarians were asked about the different populations and their use of the collection. Both identified the year-round population as approximately 16,000 residents, with a summer population of nearly 120,000. Both felt the populations used the collection in a similar way (K.W. Mahar, personal communication, February 12, 1998; I. Rice, personal communication, February 19, 1998). However, one of the interviewees, who also works on the reference desk, referred to the completion of school projects as a use of the nonfiction and reference holdings during the school months (I. Rice, personal communication, February 19, 1998). To address the increase in population, more books by popular authors and best-seller titles are leased from April through October.

In the identification of the demographic characteristics of Ocean City year-round residents, both librarians had answers consistent with official, printed materials. While they did not refer to municipal profiles, they knew the racial composition, mean age, and work-related characteristics of the year-round residents. Both agreed that they disagreed with the 20 percent college level of educational attainment cited in the municipal profile demographic information. Both felt the percentage was higher, although this impression might be attributed to personal interaction with the patrons who use the library. When asked if they consider the demographic characteristics of the community when acquiring materials for the library, they overwhelmingly said “yes.” They cited books on occupations, career development, civil service tests, finances, health, and legal issues as of particular interest to the patrons. In recent years, audio tapes, CDs, and large print books have been added to the holdings because of a population that has a segment that commutes to work and a segment that is composed of senior citizens who request large print books and audio tapes (K.W. Mahar, personal communication, February 12, 1998; I. Rice, personal communication, February 19, 1998).

Because this study attempted to link lifestyle information with the usage of the nonfiction holdings, specific questions were asked about patron choices based on the Spending Potential Indexes (see Tables 4-3, 4-4, 4-5). The librarians were asked to rank patron interests on a first, second, and third choice basis (see Appendix C). Examination of these responses reveals that the librarians have an awareness of the lifestyle interests of the Ocean City residents who patronize the library that is in line with the behaviors reported in *The Sourcebook for Zip Code Demographics*. Indeed, patrons have a high

usage of the books in the 300 century that includes resources on finances and retirement. However, patrons have used only 7% of the holdings, and circulation statistics indicate a decline in this usage (see Table 4-2). The decline is not surprising in light of patrons' frequent requests for more immediate financial information as found in the weekly *Valueline* and Moody publications.

Table 4-8
Summary of Interview Responses

Spending Potential Index:	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice
Financial Services:	Investments	Retirement plans	(no answer)
Home & Personal Care:	Lawn & Garden	Health	Appliances
Entertainment:	Travel	Hobbies	(no answer)
Areas of interests <u>without</u> reference to spending:	Psychology	Religion	Science
Fiction Genres:	Mystery	Legal thrillers	Romances

Note. Spending Potential Index refers to the consumer's inclination to purchase in the areas of "Financial Services," "The Home and Personal Care," and "Entertainment." Areas without a spending references refer to subjects that have little or no consumer purchase inclination.

In the area of "The Home and Personal Care," the librarians identified lawns and gardens and health issues as of interest to patrons. This reference is very much in keeping with the circulation statistics for the 600 century (see Table 4-2), and the Spending Potential Index which has "Lawn Garden" and "Health" as well over the spending potential mean (see Table 4-4). While both librarians felt patrons were interested in their pets and in cookbooks, they felt there was a stronger interest in appliances. They attributed this to the numerous requests for *Consumer Reports* magazines (K.W. Mahar,

personal communication, February 12, 1998; I. Rice, personal communication, February 19, 1998). Perhaps because issues of *Consumer Reports* do not circulate at the Ocean City Free Public Library, the librarians assumed that patrons had a high interest in appliances because they often requested to see these popular buying guides.

When asked about subjects in the Entertainment index (see Table 4-5), there was no doubt in the minds of the interviewees that travel books and hobbies were of significant interest to library patrons. Their responses were in keeping with the circulation statistics (see Table 4-2) that suggest a growth in circulation in the 900s (K.W. Mahar, personal communication, February 12, 1998; I. Rice, personal communication, February 19, 1998).

When asked about the other areas of the holdings, specifically those identified in this study without reference to the Spending Potential Index, the librarians's responses were similar to the circulation profile presented in Table 4-1. Both felt that the patrons were more interested in self-help or personality issue books and audio tapes. They based this response on the many reserve requests for books in this area. Although Ocean City was founded as a summer community for Methodists, the librarians did not attribute this factor to the patrons' interest in religion and mythology. They felt this interest reflected the community as a whole, which is family oriented and offers a variety of religious institutions and programs. The absence of liquor businesses in the community may contribute to this wholesome atmosphere and values. Their choice of "science" as third was based on a perceived impression that the patrons were not particularly interested in foreign languages, nor in folklore, education, or government. The lack of interest in foreign languages might be attributed to the overwhelming white, Caucasian make up of

the community. No rationale for a less significant interest in folklore, government, or education was offered (K.W. Mahar, personal communication, February 12, 1998; I. Rice, personal communication, February 19, 1998).

Ocean City library patrons use the fiction collection on a regular basis. The librarians felt that the circulation statistics indicate this and repeated requests to reserve popular fiction titles or best-sellers further support this interest. They cited “mystery” as the number one genre requested and felt that “legal thrillers” were second in popularity, albeit merely another style in the mystery genre. Romance novels also circulated well, although there was not a way to prove it with statistics because the software “Usage by Material Type” is not tagged to generate data on “romance” selections. They both felt the adult population was less interested in “science fiction” books, but they knew the children’s librarian felt her audience had a particular interest in the genre (K.W. Mahar, personal communication, February 12, 1998; I. Rice, personal communication, February 19, 1998).

Before the interviews ended, both librarians were told about this unobtrusive study of adult patron use of the library’s holdings and linkage with lifestyle behavior characteristics garnered through the 1990 U.S. Census. When asked if they thought the information obtained in this study would be beneficial to them and their understanding of the community, both said “yes,” but that they were unsure if they would modify any of their acquisition decisions based upon the study’s results. Both felt the results might reveal a need to examine a particular area of the collection that was under utilized or utilized so much that it could be increased (K.W. Mahar, personal communication,

February 12, 1998; I. Rice, personal communication, February 19, 1998).

Finally, the librarians were asked to look at the Book Selection Policy for the Ocean City Free Public Library and determine if it addressed its original intent. Because the policy was developed in 1970, prior to the employment of both librarians, they were a bit skeptical about the make up of the community identified in the policy. However, they agreed that the intention of the policy in regards to the types of materials to be purchased and made available retained its integrity and could be enforced. In fact, the policy had been used in 1996 when a patron challenged the purchase of a book. Both librarians felt that the policy should be retyped to look more contemporary (K.W. Mahar, personal communication, February 12, 1998; I. Rice, personal communication, February 19, 1998).

Chapter 5: Conclusions

Summary:

This study attempted to use lifestyle behavior demographics, gleaned from the 1990 U.S. Census for year-round residents in Ocean City, NJ, and to observe the use of nonfiction and fiction books, based on circulation statistics from the Ocean City Free Public Library over a five year period. The object of the study was to determine if the behavioral characteristics identified were also reflected in the choices of books checked out by the adult library patrons. Because these characteristics suggest interests and activities marketing researchers use to identify potential consumers, it was hypothesized that they could be used by book selectors in the acquisition of library materials. Thus, these lifestyle behavior characteristics might assist library personnel in the identification of the book subject preferences for the patrons in the community it serves. The limitations caused by the lack of circulation data by decades or units would not allow the hypothesis to be confirmed. However, the findings of the study does have some utility that can be employed by the administrative personnel at the Ocean City Free Public Library.

This study was a partial replication of the Davis and Altman (1997) “Community Lifestyle and Circulation Pattern Study” which found similar patterns and results. References to Davis and Altman study and its findings are reported with these conclusions.

Nonfiction Materials without a Spending Potential Reference

Very general and limited conclusions can be drawn from this area of the study because the Spending Potential Indexes (see Tables 4-3, 4-4, 4-5) did not address consumer interest in areas that might be linked with Dewey Decimal Classification ranges for general works, philosophy, religion, language, or science. Nevertheless, some general observations can be made.

The statistics in the 000 century show a general increase in the circulation of books over the five year period (see Table 4-1). This increase might be attributed to patrons' increased interest in computer books and manuals which are classified in this century. The acquisition librarian with 16 years experience said that more books on this subject have been purchased because of patron requests and the national consumer interest in computers (I. Rice, personal communication, February 19, 1998).

The circulation percentage for books in the 100 century reflected a use of 13% of the holdings (see Table 4-1). When asked about patron preferences in this area, the acquisition librarians identified books on psychology and the paranormal as of interest to Ocean City library patrons (see Table 4-8). Davis and Altman (1997) combined their statistical findings for the 000 and 100 centuries because the total circulation represented only 1% of the annual circulation. Hence, Davis and Altman felt their findings in the 000 and 100 centuries were not very revealing; in the Ocean City study we find that the trend to use these materials is increasing.

In general, books in the 200 century showed an increase in their circulation (see Table 4-1). This increase was especially true in the months of January (see Appendix C),

and might be attributed to academic assignments in the areas of religion and mythology. The librarians identified the subject of religion as important to Ocean City residents based on their knowledge that the community promotes itself as “American’s Family Resort” and continues to prohibit liquor businesses or the serving of alcoholic beverages in the town. Hence, religion based values appear to be important to Ocean City residents and may contribute to their interest in books in the 200 century of the public library. Davis and Altman (1997) drew no conclusion about circulation in this century other than to observe that in 10 of the 11 libraries in their study, the circulation was less than 1%.

The number of books that circulated at the Ocean City Free Public Library in the 400 and 500 centuries varied two percentage points, but the actual holdings varied by 1,000 volumes. The fact that the 400 holdings contains 280 books (see Table 4-1) may be a element in this profile. The racial composition of Ocean City may be a factor as well, since the resident population is overwhelmingly Caucasian. Davis and Altman (1997) found that interest in the 400s was greatest in the community that had the largest population whose native language was not English. Hence, ethnicity may influence book selection in this century.

The Ocean City profile for the 500 century is difficult to explain and may suggest that the books in the science holdings, the largest holdings in segment of the study (see Table 4-1), are dated or are used in the library and, therefore, not checked out. More study of this area is needed to determine if patrons are relying more often on science books in the reference holdings which do not circulate. Davis and Altman (1997) did not discuss book use in this century, but they did report a 3.8% circulation in the 500 century.

However, unlike the Ocean City study which found that 7% of the 500 holdings circulated, Davis and Altman found the circulation in the 500 century to be the greatest 3.8%. This 3.8% circulation total was the greatest of those Dewey Decimal Classification centuries profiled in the Nonfiction Materials without a Spending Potential Reference. While the comparison is actually “apples and oranges,” further study of the Ocean City holdings seems evident.

Davis and Altman (1997) did not address the 000, 100, 200, 400, or 500 centuries in any depth because they can not be referenced to the Spending Potential Index. Their original intent was to examine the circulation patterns by decades, but they were unable to do so for the same reason this study failed to accomplish it. Statistical records were maintained in centuries rather than decades. However, Davis and Altman did have six libraries that reported their circulation statistics by decades. Davis and Altman concluded that “the differences in circulation patterns are minimal and certainly not reflective of the varying lifestyles of the communities” (p. 43).

Nonfiction Materials with a Spending Potential Reference

Many of the lifestyle behaviors analyzed by the CACI Marketing Systems and reported in *The Sourcebook of Zip Code Demographics* 11th edition deal with subjects a librarian might catalog in the DDC’s 600 range. This study found that the Ocean City Free Public Library had the greatest number of nonfiction books in the 600 holdings and that 10% of these holdings circulated (see Table 4-2). The 600 holdings consistently ranked first in frequency of circulation (see Appendix C). Davis and Altman (1997) also found the 600 holdings to be the greatest in number of volumes and in circulation. In addition, it

was the only century to garner consistently higher than 5% in circulation among all the libraries in their study.

The standard error score in the 600 century may be large because many books in the century have been purchased in recent years to satisfy patron requests. The acquisition librarian with 16 years of experience specifically named books on health, gardening, pet care, and cooking as areas that had been expanded in the collection (I. Rice, personal communication, March 9, 1998). To gain more definitive information about the circulation patterns of books, for example, on health, gardening, pets, and cooking, circulation statistics must be obtained based on each specific Dewey Decimal Classification or at least by decades. Since the Spending Potential Index (see Table 4-3, 4-4, 4-5) addresses these subjects fairly specifically and identifies them as related to “The Home” and to “Personal Care,” a detailed study of the book choices made by patrons might provide more insight into the interests of the Ocean City residents, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the 600 holdings.

The Spending Potential Index in the “Financial Services” categories showed that Ocean City residents had the inclination to spend more money on investments than the average U.S. citizen (see Table 4-3). The 300 holdings at the Ocean City Free Public Library are the second largest in the nonfiction holdings (see Table 4-2), and with the exception of 1997, they ranked second in frequency of circulation. Overall, however, only 7% of the 300 holdings circulated. During their interviews, both librarians clearly acknowledged that investments is an area of particular interests to Ocean City residents (see Table 4-8). They could further support this observation with their reference desk

experiences and patrons' questions about *Valueline*, *Barrons*, and Moody's investment publications. The interviewees were surprised at the low circulation percentage findings in the study when considering the size of the 300 holdings and its second place ranking (K. W. Mahar & I. Rice, personal communication, March 9, 1998). Davis and Altman (1997) made a similar observation about low circulation, 5.1%, in the 300s, since books in this range account for a significant number of books published and purchased annually by libraries. Similar to the observation drawn about the ephemeral nature of information in science, it might be suggested that Ocean City library patrons rely more on weekly publications for financial information. Here again, a more detailed study of the circulation patterns at the Ocean City Free Public Library might reveal exactly which subject fields are, indeed, circulating. Perhaps, the books on economics, education, folklore, government, and law — also found in the 300s — are out of date, in poor condition, or of little interest to the patrons.

The circulation statistics for the 700 century over the five years in the study show varying increases in the number of books checked out and an average use of 9% of the holdings (see Table 4-2). The standard error of 69, however, suggests an inconsistency in the use of books in the 700s, which is further confirmed by the marked increase of use of these books in the month of January (see Appendix C). This mid-winter increase could be related to academic assignments. The Spending Potential Index for "Entertainment" (see Table 4-4) reveals that Ocean City residents have an above average spending profile for sports and the mean average spending potential in the area of hobbies — both subjects cataloged in the 700 DDC. The more experienced acquisition librarian confirmed

numerous requests by patrons for books on decorating and handcrafts, which suggests some relationship to the Spending Potential Index (I. Rice, personal communication, March 9, 1998). The 7% above average spending potential on sports might suggest consumer spending on sporting events and sports-related activities. The 9% use of these holdings may imply that patrons check out books to read about sports, teams, crafts, and hobbies before investing any money in them. However, since the 700 century also contains art and film resources which are also popular with the patrons, no clear linkage to the "Entertainment" Spending Potential Index can be made. This is another century where a more detailed study of circulation by decades and units would give better insight into circulation patterns and community interests. Davis and Altman (1997) did not offer any discussion of their findings concerning the 700 century other than a circulation average of 5.1%, which was the same percentage as that of the 300 century. In their study, circulation of books in the 600 century ranked first (7.9%); circulation in the 300s and 700s tied for second place at 5.1%.

The below average spending potential on travel, found in the "Entertainment" category (see Table 4-5), is a surprise since both librarians felt that Ocean City residents had a significant interest in this travel activities (see Table 4-8). They felt, although they did not have the circulation statistics to support it, that most of the books that circulated in the 900s were in the travel fields rather than in the history fields. Again, experience with book requests that led to purchase or directional requests of the library staff for the location of travel books made the librarians inclined to feel confident about the interests of Ocean City residents in travel books. They could not and would not speculate on the

financial arrangements the residents use to fund their travel excursions (K. W. Mahar & I. Rice, personal communication, March 9, 1998). Since a definitive picture of the use of these holdings was lacking in this study, it would be prudent to conduct a use study since the 900s account for the third largest holdings in the nonfiction collection. While it might be an oxymoron to say history never gets old, the collection may not contain up-to-date resources on third world nations, the Middle East, or countries that have undergone significant changes in the 1990s. Likewise, Davis and Altman (1997) were surprised at the low circulation of the 900s, in their case 4.3%, since books in the 900s like those for the 300 century, are published and purchased on a regular basis. Because Davis and Altman were able to identify circulation statistics for the 920s, collected biographies, but the Ocean City study could not, the results of the two studies in this area can not be compared further.

During the five year period in this study, books in the 800 century consistently circulated the least often (see Appendix C). The circulation summary showed that 6% of the 800 holdings circulated with a standard error of 6.3, suggesting the greatest consistency of use. (see Table 4-2). The Spending Potential Index in the "Entertainment" category addresses theatre, and profiles Ocean City residents as having a 1% above average spending interest in theatre (see Table 4-5). This slightly above average spending potential profile yet low book circulation average in the 800 holdings might suggest that Ocean City residents would prefer to view a play rather than to read one. However, discussions with both acquisition librarians revealed that they were aware of weaknesses in the 800 holdings. Because of minimal requests for specific drama titles, essays, poetry, or

criticisms, additions to the 800 holdings have been limited (K. W. Mahar & I. Rice, personal communication, March 9, 1998). These holdings need to be formally evaluated before even general conclusions can be drawn about their use by Ocean City library patrons. The only finding reported by Davis and Altman (1997) relative to the 800s was that 1.7% of the holdings circulated. It had the least percentage of circulation other than in the 200s and 400s which were so minimal, Davis and Altman felt the circulation statistics were not worth discussion.

Fiction

It is not possible to draw many meaningful conclusions about this study's findings regarding the use of the hardback fiction collection by adult Ocean City year-round residents. Changes in the cataloging and book processing procedures in 1990 limited the identification of genre choices made by patrons. Since genre tags are no longer added to catalog records and genre label are no longer added to book spines, the statistical records for the circulation of fiction genre are without significance. Because of this decision to eliminate genre identification almost completely, it might be observed that the specification of genre checkouts in statistical reports should have been eliminated too.

Davis and Altman (1997) examined the use of the fiction holdings in relation to the education attainment of community members. They also found that mysteries circulated most frequently and up to 52.3% in communities with a high ratio of college graduates. Because of the changes in the cataloging of fiction at the Ocean City Free Public Library, no discussion can be offered regarding the circulation of mysteries other than the librarians had the perception that many of their patrons had an education beyond the high school

level (K.W Mahar, personal communication, February 12, 1998; I. Rice, personal communication, February 19, 1998). Davis and Altman also discussed the circulation of romance novels, a genre which was not examined in the Ocean City study since the genre was not included in fiction statistical reports.

When the total number of fiction genre holdings at Ocean City Free Public Library are added to the total number of hardback fiction holdings, the total is approximately 17,000 volumes. The annual totals show a decline in the circulation of fiction, with the exception of 1997 when there was a modest increase (see Table 4-6). A few observations can be made based on the purpose of the library in Ocean City and on input from the interviewees. First, the library serves at least two populations that are significantly different in numbers: approximately 16,000 year-round residents; 120,000 summer residents. The librarians both indicated that books, particularly popular fiction, are purchased or leased with both populations in mind. The vast difference in population numbers contributes to the large number of fiction volumes in the holdings. This desire to fulfill the reading needs of both summer and year-round populations has been an inherent part of the book selection policy and process since the library's founding in 1915.

Secondly, after the move in 1990 to the larger facility, the acquisition librarians began purchasing audio tapes for the fiction and nonfiction adult holdings. The librarian with sixteen years of experience noted that patrons did not "latch on" to the audio tapes immediately. However, in the last two-three years, she knows there has been an increase in requests for them and attributes it to built-in automobile tape decks and residents who drive, most often to Philadelphia, for employment (I. Rice, personal communication,

March 9, 1998). In addition, the new facility provided more shelving space for paperback books, which were also added to the collection with increased frequency and numbers (K. W. Mahar & I. Rice, personal communications, March 9, 1998). Consequently, an overall decline in the circulation statistics for hardback fiction books might be expected since the materials are now available in more formats. This fact, especially regarding audio tapes, is clearly illustrated in Table 4-7. Perhaps this transition in material type use implies that Ocean City library patrons find audio tapes entertaining or another way to acquire information. It also appears that the direction the Ocean City Free Public Library took to acquire these materials beginning in 1990 demonstrated insight relative to coming trends.

Interviews

The interviews with the librarians allowed for some of the interpretation of the findings in this study. As professionals, the actual interviews revealed that they were very aware of the racial, age, population, and related demographic data that profiles a community. Their tenure at the Ocean City Free Public Library and their life-long residency in Ocean City have allowed them to become very familiar with the nuances of the populations, both winter and summer. When asked questions related to the lifestyle behaviors examined in this study, both could identify subject preferences of the year-round population without hesitation and with accuracy. Clearly, it can be concluded that they know their composition and preferences of their clientele. This “expertise” may be indicative of personnel with this background working in any business in a small community. However, while the personal goals of the librarians might be to maintain the integrity of the town’s library collection, their actions in the book selection process are

more often motivated by patrons' requests for titles and the recommendations of publishers. Hence, a formal evaluation of the holdings, particularly the nonfiction holdings, might help them to further identify the strengths and weaknesses in the holdings. At the same time, the Book Selection Policy, developed in 1970, should be reviewed and updated, even if only to refer to changes made because of the addition of technology into library operations and in the types of materials acquired.

Recommendations

The hypothesis in this study was to link lifestyle behaviors for Ocean City year-round residents revealed during the 1990 U.S. Census and interpreted with references to consumer spending in *The Sourcebook for Zip Code Demographics* with circulation statistics for adult patrons at the Ocean City Free Public Library. The purpose of this study was to determine if the findings would be useful to the librarians at the Ocean City Free Public Library in their book acquisition activities. The hypothesis was not confirmed because of limitations in statistical information. Davis and Altman (1997) were unable to confirm a similar hypothesis because of these same statistical limitations. If statistical circulation data by decades had been available, the researchers in both cases might have been able to confirm the hypothesis. Hence, the methodology used in this type of lifestyle study might produce meaningful results if the preparations for the study were set up in advance. Specifically, circulation statistics need to be tracked at least by decades if not units. For example, in the case of the Ocean City Free Public Library, it might be advantageous to begin a similar future study with the circulation of books in the 400s and

800s, since statistics suggest underutilization in these centuries and weaknesses were acknowledged in the 800s holdings.

This type of unobtrusive study, referred to by Davis and Altman (1997) as a “Community Lifestyle and Circulation Pattern Study,” has utility in that the sources, such as *The Sourcebook for Zip Code Demographics*, exist and provide unbiased data about a population. The findings from such a noninvasive study could be further studied through invasive measures, such as surveys, questionnaires, interviews, or focus groups. Thus, the unobtrusive methodology used in this study might be a preliminary activity prior to an in depth examination of a collection.

Finally, the cost effectiveness of this unobtrusive study should not be ignored because it also suggests utility to acquisition librarians. The time required of the person(s) conducting the study is the only major cost. The automation of library services provides easy access to statistical information. This type of study requires examination of circulation records and an awareness of the content of the holdings. An acquisition librarian should be competent enough to make meaningful observations about the book choices made by patrons and the ability of the collection to provide for these choices.

Questions for Future Study

The linkage of collection development to community demographics and preferences based on circulation patterns might encourage a library institution to become a “popular materials center” rather than a resource of information and entertainment. Consequently, study into the value of user studies at all may have some merit. Would it be more meaningful to acquisition librarians to acquire better skills in the identification of

quality materials that fulfill the needs of the public rather than to conduct use and user studies?

This Ocean City study speculated about the age of holdings in some areas of the nonfiction collection. This speculation suggests the need to conduct an age analysis study of the nonfiction holdings. Given the expertise and time needed to conduct this type of collection evaluation, one might have this question: How often do public libraries conduct an age evaluation of their collection and how utilitarian are the results?

Another interesting offshoot of this study might be to replicate it using another New Jersey shore community that experiences the same fluctuation in populations between the winter and summer months. Do public libraries in resort communities with seasonal patrons experience similar use of their collection? Do their librarians make decisions based on the needs of the year-round residents over those of their seasonal users?

Finally, much of the research in this Ocean City study and Davis and Altman (1997) study relied on the Spending Potential Index provided by CACI Marketing Systems. Do people still want books? With the availability of internet access to the worldwide resources, are books going to become obsolete? In the future, will the public place the same value on traditional library materials and use them to address their lifestyle interests, or will they value and consume more technology-based resources to enhance their living condition?

Regardless of the direction library patrons take in the future, it is concluded that the public library has an important role in society and in the community it resides.

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Appendix A

CACI
MARKETING SYSTEMS

March, 23 1998

Judy Perkins
Ocean City Public Library

Dear Ms. Perkins,

As per your request, here is authorization for your use of CACI Marketing System's data from the Sourcebook of ZIP Code Demographics (11th Edition). When utilizing our data within a paper your only requirement is to cite CACI Marketing Systems as the source. If you have any further questions or require any other assistance please call our Customer Service Department at 800-292-2240.

Sincerely,



Chris Melera
Customer Service Department
CACI Marketing Systems

CACI International Inc and Subsidiary Companies:

Worldwide Headquarters - 1100 North Glebe Road - Arlington, Virginia 22201 - (703) 841-7800 - Fax: (703) 243-6272

WASHINGTON D.C. - LA JOLLA - LONDON

Appendix B

Interview Protocol

1. May I have the correct spelling of your full name and your job title?
2. How long have you been employed at this library? _____ How many years have you held your current position? _____
3. I'm interested in the work you do in the area of adult book acquisition. What are your responsibilities in this area? Have you had any particular training for these responsibilities?
4. How many people would you estimate live in Ocean City year-round? _____
How many people would you estimate live in Ocean City during the summer? _____
5. Does this change in population affect the types of books you purchase for adults? _____ Please explain.
6. Does this change in population affect the number of books you purchase for adults? _____ Could you give an example?
7. In my research, I'm examining the book choices made by the adult, year-round residents of Ocean City. Do you believe there is a difference in the choices they make in comparison to the choices made by the summer population? _____
Why do you think there is or is not a difference?
8. I'd like to know more about how you determine what titles to purchase. Let's start with adult fiction. How do you make your selections?
9. The circulation statistics identify the check outs in fiction with four descriptors: mystery, western, science fiction, historical fiction. Based on your experience, which one of these areas is the most popular to the year-round residents? _____

Which one is the least popular? _____

10. In the process of making your acquisition selections, do you ever refer to these circulation statistics and the descriptors? _____ How do you use this information? or Why don't you use this information?

11. Let's continue to think about the year-round residents of Ocean City. In racial composition, they are mostly _____. What is their median age? _____.

What is the highest level of education they have attained, on the average? _____

12. Are you basing your responses on information from a reference source or on personal knowledge / experience? _____

13. Are there any other demographic characteristics regarding the adult year round population of Ocean City that you use in the process of selecting books for the library holdings?

14. Does this demographic information influence the selection of books you purchase for the adult year-round population? _____ Why is that?

15. Let's continue to think about the year-round population and choices of books they make in the area of financial services. Based on your experience, in which of these four categories are the adult patrons most interested? second choice? least interested?

_____ auto loans/purchase _____ home loans/purchase _____ investments
_____ retirement plans

16. In the area of the home, in which of these three categories are the adult patrons most interested? second choice? least interested?

_____ appliances _____ electronics _____ food _____ health
_____ home repair _____ lawn & garden _____ pets _____ remodeling

17. In the area of entertainment, in which of these four categories are the adult patrons most interested? second choice? least interested?

_____ hobbies / toys _____ sports _____ theatre _____ travel

18. There are five other areas I'd like you to think about. Based on your experience, which one of these areas is of most interest to year-round adult residents of Ocean City?

_____ reference _____ philosophy / psychology _____ religion
_____ languages _____ pure science (math, chemistry, nature)

19. You selected _____ as your first choice. I'll read them again, and ask you to make a second and a third choice. In other words, in which two other areas are the adult patrons interested?

_____ reference _____ philosophy / psychology _____ religion
_____ languages _____ pure science (math, chemistry, nature)

20. I based the organization of the last seven question on information obtained from the 1990 Census which was reported as a lifestyles demographics profile for Ocean City. Do you ever refer to national reports, such as the census, in the process of identifying books which may be of interest to the adult patrons of Ocean City? _____
Why or why not?

21. Do you think that having this lifestyle demographic information would change any of the decisions you make about purchasing books? In other words, would you purchase more books on _____ (response to Q# 16) if I told you that the census reports the residents of Ocean City are very interested in lawns and gardens? _____ Why or why not?

22. What sources do you use in the process of deciding which books to add to the adult fiction and nonfiction holdings?

23. In the last five years, has there been any significant change in the way or reason for selecting books for the adult fiction and nonfiction holdings?

24. I'm going to show you a copy of the Book Selection Policy for the Ocean City Free Public Library and ask you to review it. Do you believe the community addressed in the policy is the same one today as it was when the policy was written?
_____ Why or why not?

Note. These questions were posed at separate interviews conducted on February 12 and 19, 1997.

Appendix C

Usage by Materials Types

Nonfiction Materials without Spending Potential Reference

DDC	Dec. 1992	Jan. 1993	Feb. 1993	Ave. Circ.	Rank
000	25	51	38	38	4
100	142	191	161	165	1
200	43	61	62	55	3
400	14	16	46	25	5
500	70	89	91	83	2

Nonfiction Materials with Spending Potential Reference

DDC	Dec. 1992	Jan. 1993	Feb. 1993	Ave. Circ.	Rank
300	426	522	549	499	2
600	466	711	663	613	1
700	210	303	304	272	4
800	88	135	159	127	5
900	246	373	397	339	3

Note. Statistics come from “Usage by Material Types” generated by the Ocean City Free Public Library. Spending Potential Index refers to the consumer purchasing potential reported in *The Sourcebook for Zip Code Demographics* 11th ed. (1997). Ranking: 1= Most popular choice; 5 = Least popular choice.

Fiction Hardback Materials

	Dec. 1992	Jan. 1993	Feb. 1993	Ave. Circ.	Rank
FICTION	2039	2348	2421	2269	
Mystery	485	546	530	520	1
Western	5	30	21	17	4
Sci. Fiction	68	53	48	56	3
His. Fiction	71	102	91	88	2

Note. Ranking: 1= Most popular choice; 4 = Least popular choice.

Fiction Audio Cassettes and Paperback Circulation

Material Type	Dec. 1992	Jan. 1993	Feb. 1993	Ave. Circ.
Audio Tapes	178	259	271	236
Paperbacks	453	672	682	602

Note. Statistics come from "Usage by Material Types" generated by the Ocean City Free Public Library. Audio tapes refers to books on tape or spoken word cassettes.

Usage by Materials Types

Nonfiction Materials without Spending Potential Reference

DDC	Dec. 1993	Jan. 1994	Feb. 1994	Ave. Circ.	Rank
000	61	62	74	66	4
100	130	155	143	143	1
200	53	100	81	78	3
400	23	31	37	30	5
500	78	82	92	84	2

Nonfiction Materials with Spending Potential Reference

DDC	Dec. 1993	Jan. 1994	Feb. 1994	Ave. Circ.	Rank
300	373	447	383	401	2
600	492	670	673	612	1
700	236	370	263	290	4
800	119	168	132	140	5
900	337	379	317	343	3

Note. Statistics come from "Usage by Material Types" generated by the Ocean City Free Public Library. Spending Potential Index refers to the consumer purchasing potential reported in *The Sourcebook for Zip Code Demographics* 11th ed. (1997). Ranking: 1= Most popular choice; 5 = Least popular choice.

Fiction Hardback Materials

	Dec. 1993	Jan. 1994	Feb. 1994	Ave. Circ.	Rank
FICTION	1959	2439	2142	2180	
Mystery	594	655	596	615	1
Western	14	17	8	13	4
Sci. Fiction	37	40	36	38	3
His. Fiction	74	96	74	81	2

Note. Ranking: 1= Most popular choice; 4 = Least popular choice.

Fiction Audio Cassettes and Paperback Circulation

Material Type	Dec. 1993	Jan. 1994	Feb. 1994	Ave. Circ.
Audio Tapes	493	831	663	662
Paperbacks	771	543	511	608

Note. Statistics come from "Usage by Material Types" generated by the Ocean City Free Public Library. Audio tapes refers to books on tape or spoken word cassettes.

Usage by Materials Types

Nonfiction Materials without Spending Potential Reference

DDC	Dec. 1994	Jan. 1995	Feb. 1995	Ave. Circ.	Rank
000	70	94	109	91	3
100	123	174	181	159	1
200	77	117	92	95	4
400	24	23	39	29	5
500	80	137	100	106	2

Nonfiction Materials with Spending Potential Reference

DDC	Dec. 1994	Jan. 1995	Feb. 1995	Ave. Circ.	Rank
300	396	538	493	476	2
600	594	911	889	798	1
700	247	380	366	331	4
800	106	152	164	141	5
900	276	448	374	366	3

Note. Statistics come from "Usage by Material Types" generated by the Ocean City Free Public Library. Spending Potential Index refers to the consumer purchasing potential reported in *The Sourcebook for Zip Code Demographics* 11th ed. (1997). Ranking: 1= Most popular choice; 5 = Least popular choice.

Fiction Hardback Materials

	Dec. 1994	Jan. 1995	Feb. 1995	Ave. Circ.	Rank
FICTION	1631	1908	1640	1726	
Mystery	323	371	346	347	1
Western	4	4	6	5	4
Sci. Fiction	18	27	34	26	3
His. Fiction	44	74	55	58	2

Note. Ranking: 1= Most popular choice; 4 = Least popular choice.

Fiction Audio Cassettes and Paperback Circulation

Material Type	Dec. 1994	Jan. 1995	Feb. 1995	Ave. Circ.
Audio Tapes	670	791	745	735
Paperbacks	830	982	928	897

Note. Statistics come from "Usage by Material Types" generated by the Ocean City Free Public Library. Audio tapes refers to books on tape or spoken word cassettes.

Usage by Materials Types

Nonfiction Materials without Spending Potential Reference

DDC	Dec. 1995	Jan. 1996	Feb. 1996	Ave. Circ.	Rank
000	93	114	94	100	2
100	101	123	126	117	1
200	73	91	63	76	4
400	14	21	15	17	5
500	146	105	109	120	3

Nonfiction Materials with Spending Potential Reference

DDC	Dec. 1995	Jan. 1996	Feb. 1996	Ave. Circ.	Rank
300	400	446	494	447	2
600	592	765	816	724	1
700	368	503	463	445	3
800	119	142	127	129	5
900	385	486	380	417	4

Note. Statistics come from "Usage by Material Types" generated by the Ocean City Free Public Library. Spending Potential Index refers to the consumer purchasing potential reported in *The Sourcebook for Zip Code Demographics* 11th ed. (1997). Ranking: 1= Most popular choice; 5 = Least popular choice.

Fiction Hardback Materials

	Dec. 1995	Jan. 1996	Feb. 1996	Ave. Circ.	Rank
FICTION	1268	1734	1640	1547	
Mystery	189	226	247	221	1
Western	10	9	4	8	4
Sci. Fiction	19	14	15	16	3
His. Fiction	26	43	46	38	2

Note. Ranking: 1= Most popular choice; 4 = Least popular choice.

Fiction Audio Cassettes and Paperback Circulation

Material Type	Dec. 1995	Jan. 1996	Feb. 1996	Ave. Circ.
Audio Tapes	801	922	964	896
Paperbacks	788	1013	846	882

Note. Statistics come from "Usage by Material Types" generated by the Ocean City Free Public Library. Audio tapes refers to books on tape or spoken word cassettes.

Usage by Materials Types

Nonfiction Materials without Spending Potential Reference

DDC	Dec. 1996	Jan. 1997	Feb. 1997	Ave. Circ.	Rank
000	75	150	97	107	2
100	117	170	143	143	1
200	85	121	69	92	3
400	2	24	24	23	5
500	50	93	77	73	4

Nonfiction Materials with Spending Potential Reference

DDC	Dec. 1996	Jan. 1997	Feb. 1997	Ave. Circ.	Rank
300	383	478	413	425	2
600	563	853	719	712	1
700	292	411	403	369	4
800	145	125	128	133	5
900	304	467	445	405	3

Note. Statistics come from "Usage by Material Types" generated by the Ocean City Free Public Library. Spending Potential Index refers to the consumer purchasing potential reported in *The Sourcebook for Zip Code Demographics* 11th ed. (1997). Ranking: 1= Most popular choice; 5 = Least popular choice.

Fiction Hardback Materials

	Dec. 1996	Jan. 1997	Feb. 1997	Ave. Circ.	Rank
FICTION	1324	1783	1726	1611	
Mystery	198	290	232	240	1
Western	5	15	2	7	4
Sci. Fiction	8	19	15	14	3
His. Fiction	22	39	29	30	2

Note. Ranking: 1= Most popular choice; 4 = Least popular choice.

Fiction Audio Cassettes and Paperback Circulation

Material Type	Dec. 1996	Jan. 1997	Feb. 1997	Ave. Circ.
Audio Tapes	957	1224	1166	1116
Paperbacks	685	893	997	858

Note. Statistics come from "Usage by Material Types" generated by the Ocean City Free Public Library. Audio tapes refers to books on tape or spoken word cassettes.